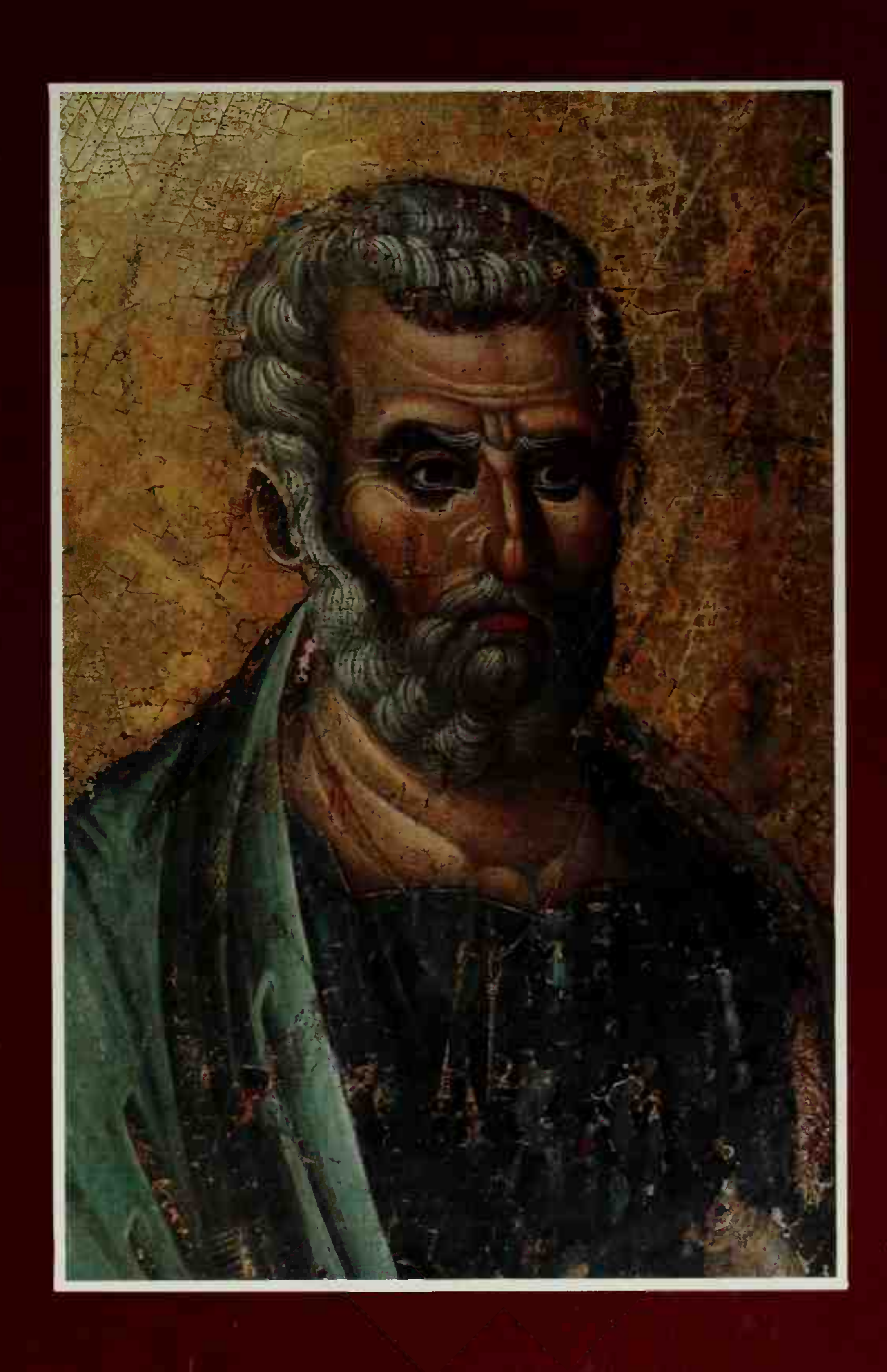
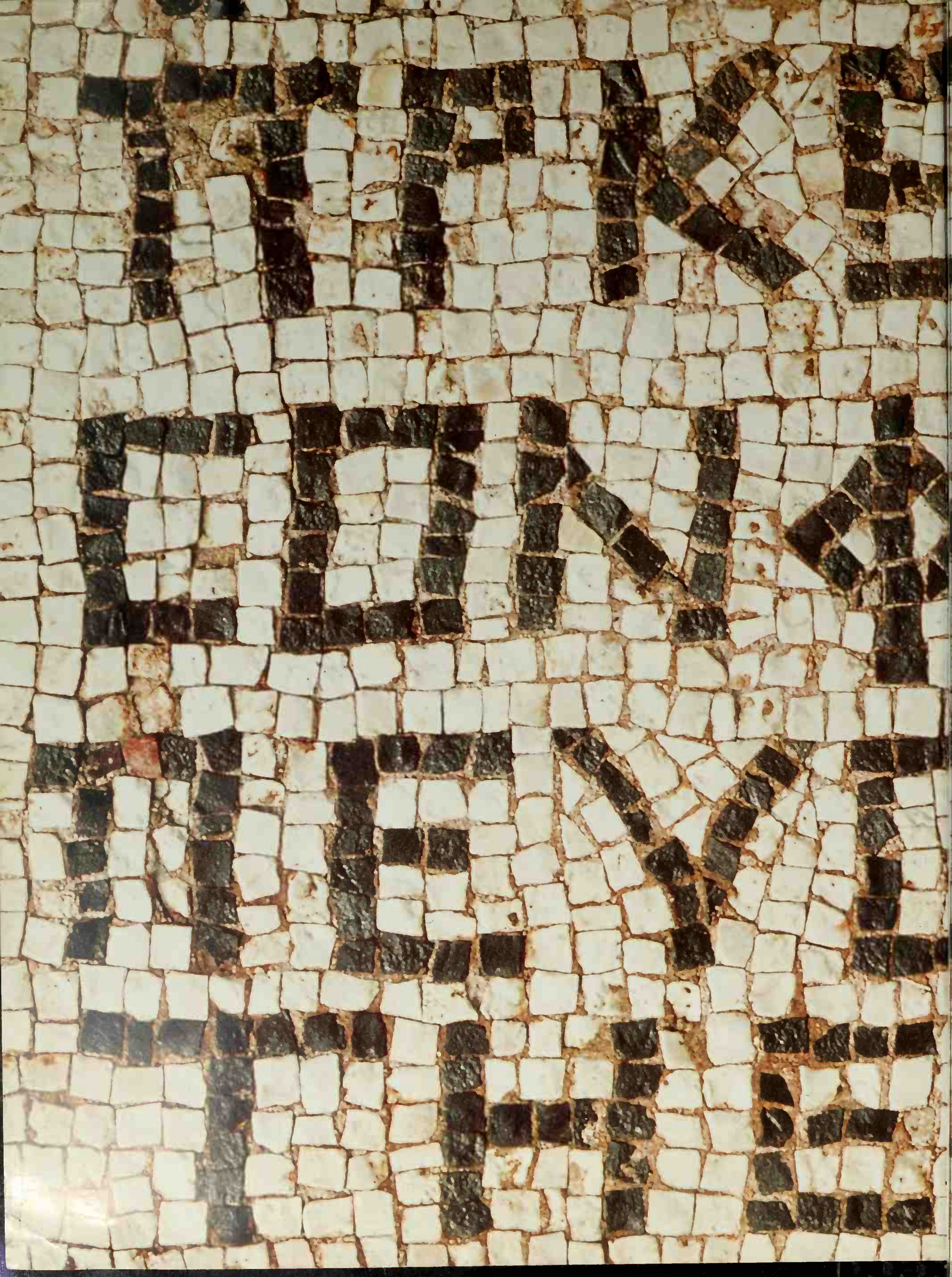
Icons and East Christian Works of Art

Edited and Published by Michel van Rijn







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The Cretan School (15th - 17th Century)

by Dr. Manolis Chatzidakis

The Cretan School of painting appears to have been very professionally organized and evolved with great continuity and consistency in its technical and aesthetic values. This local 'school' of painting succeeded to a certain extent the art of Constantinople in the sense of the oecumenic role that the capital played until its fall in 1453.

This important phenomenon dates from the end of the 14th century, after the sporadic arrival in Crete of artists from Constantinople and, possibly, from other major artistic centres of Byzantium. This resulted in the gradual penetration of the hitherto provincial art of the island by new iconographical, stylistic elements, which were slowly but steadily to be assimilated. After the Fall of Constantinople, local conditions were sufficiently favourable for the existing nucleus to be strengthened, resulting in an autonomous school of painting, whose production was mainly destined for export.

The art of Crete has attracted Byzantine scholars since Gabriel Millet (Recherches sur l'Iconographie de l'Evangile, Paris 1916). Many Greek and Russian byzantinologists have published fundamental studies on the subject. More recently, close research in the Venetian State Archives has been carried out by young scholars of the Hellenic Institute of Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Studies in Venice and by the Reverend Mario Cattapan. The results have provided definite solutions to a larger number of important problems, concerning not only chronology but also methods of production of these works of art, their markets and their influence.

Indications were also found of the number of people involved in this production and the extent of the individual painter's activity. This covered a broad spectrum, from a simple design for a chest or the decoration of the ceilings of mansions to the painting of icons and monumental murals in churches. This documentary information, combined with what we know from the monuments themselves, especially the icons, allow us to follow the development of Cretan art with some accuracy. This development is closely related to the evolution of the cities of Crete, Herakleion (Candia), Chania and Rethymno, which under Venetian rule (1210-1669) became important commercial and cultural centres. Thanks to the relatively tolerant policy of the Venetian state, they attracted, especially after the Fall of Constantinople, a large number of artists and craftsmen who came both from areas controlled by the Ottomans and from Italy. Thus we know today that for the period 1453-1525 the number of painters active in the city of Herakleion alone reached the astonishing total of 130-150 persons.

It is not surprising, therefore, that a traveller of 1518, Jacques le Saige, noted that 'most of the Cretans are religious painters, carpenters and furniture makers'. Documentary evidence also shows that a significant number of icons were commissioned from painters established in Crete by foreign merchants, mainly from Venice, and by Catholic bishoprics and monasteries both in Crete and in other Venetian-ruled territories, for example Nauplion, and by influential Greeks and Venetians. Thus, on one occasion, nine hundred icons of the Virgin were commissioned from Venice. It seems that the numerous painters of religious works in Crete were mostly engaged in the execution of portable icons. Consequently, mural art, though not entirely ignored, was nevertheless neglected. This predilection for portable icons does not mean that when the needs of orthodox Hellenism required these famous painters to put their talents at the disposal of Ottoman-ruled Greece they were not able to execute wonderful murals in churches of all sizes.

The exodus of Cretan painters from their island, which apparently took place on a large scale after 1500, symbolizes both the maturity of this very conservative art and the prestige it gained in the Post-Byzantine world. It is certainly no accident that this exodus was attracted by two poles: the celebrated centres of monastic Orthodoxy – Mount Athos and the Meteora – and the source of power and wealth, the State of Venice.

In summarizing the specific characteristics, the merits, of the Cretan style, one might say that Cretan art upheld the best Palaeologan tradition of the 14th and 15th centuries. But with a

difference: Cretan art imposes a more tightly organized synthesis on the model, of the Palaeologan style. It shows a clear tendency towards eurythmia, firmer drawing and drapery which is harsher, more geometric, but also richer in terms of colouring.
The modelling of the face, where age and youth are clearly differentiated, seeks always to render reflection of heavenly light. Stance, pose and gesture are imbued with an aristocratic nobility and the figures of older people are distinguished by an air of deep wisdom and great dignity. Thanks to the use of these modes, Crete always remains within the limits of the transcendental in unrealistic Byzantine art. These same elements, however, add a classical character to Cretan art: the calm scenes, dogmatically correct, and the firmly established relations between the figures, the edifices and the landscape, express eternal truths which lend the character of symbolic permanence to each event illustrated.
These works often betray Italian influences. Only natural for an art form that emanates from cities built in the style of the Renaissance, their inhabitants dressed in Frankish fashions. More generally, the character of the flourishing, literary and dramatic culture in these cities may be viewed as the Greek face of the European Renaissance and, later, of the Baroque. These influences were, however, diversified by the taste of a clientele which ranged from the monks of Mount Athos and Mount Sinai to the orthodox bourgeoisie of Crete, the Ionian islands and Venice and also included the Catholics of the same countries and of the Dalmatian coast. Under these conditions the Cretan painters had no other choice but to develop abilities in painting both 'a la Greca' and/or 'a l'Italiana'. But their style always remained 'Cretan'.
The occupation of Crete by the Turks (1669) put an end to this phase of Greek culture and was also instrumental in lowering artistic standards. It also resulted in the emigration of Cretan painters, and the dispersal of a considerable number of works of Cretan art to other territories, often to those under Venetian rule but mainly to the Ionian islands. Here the echo of Cretan painting is to be found until about the end of the 18th century.

Finally, we should refer to some common terminology which recent research has proved to be erroneous. The 'Italocretan School' does not exist. The sporadic appearance of Italian elements is not a determining factor in the formation of the Cretan school of painting. The term 'Italocretan' can be used only for a definite group of paintings produced by Cretan painters in imitation of Italian works and destined for a Catholic clientele. The subject of such works is the Madre di Consolazione, the Pietà, etc. Moreover, the term 'Madonneri', frequently used in modern literature, is unknown in Crete, where terms like 'pictor', 'depentor', 'ζωγράφος', 'σγουράφος' were used. The term 'madonnero' or 'de la Madonne' can be used only with reference to the relatively limited number of Greek painters who worked in Venice in the 16th and 17th centuries and to distinguish them clearly from other, modern painters. Thus the 'Madonneri School' does not really exist despite the use of the term in various studies.

CENTRAL AND NORTHERN GREECE

From the 16th to the 18th centuries many Cretan painters were at work in Central and Northern Greece. At the same time, local workshops developed on Mount Athos and in Western Macedonia and succeeded in gaining a certain autonomy. Their main characteristic was the transformation of models from Cretan painting to an art of a more popular style. This was because, under the Turks, and especially in Epirus and Macedonia, religious painting developed in rural areas, while on Crete artistic production was concentrated in big cities.

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Majestas Mariae in Late Greek and Russian Icons

by Prof. Dr. George Galavaris, Mc Gill University

Anyone who is fortunate enough to converse with the world of icons, whether in churches, museums or private collections, becomes aware not only of the icon's aesthetic beauty but of the many secrets of its spiritual message. However, if one is to perceive this message fully and understand its secrets, one must approach the icon through a 'pilgrim's way', that is, one must enter the transformed world which the icon represents and partake of it through the eyes of the soul. If one is able to do this then, he realizes that the most important contributors to the creation of the world of the icon are: the power of faith in all its manifestations, the intellect of the theologian, the artist who gives flesh by pigment and colours to the ideas proposed by the Church.

Above all, and in a paradoxical way, the real creator of the icon is the worshipper. For it is he who, standing opposite the icon in order to render honour or to adore it, enters the world of the icon and while discovering its secrets he creates new ones. The icon then becomes a symbol with many transformations depending on the faithful who, kneeling in front of the icon, kissing it, lighting a candle, reciting a secret prayer in his heart, whispering a hymn with his lips, asks for

the Grace of God to descend upon him through the icon.
Through these acts the 'pilgrim' creates the world of the icon. In its turn the icon, that is, the symbol itself, grows in the eyes and the heart of the worshipper. It begins to undergo transformation that must respond to the demands of the pilgrim's approach to it. And this is how the iconographic types appear and multiply themselves; this is how and why themes are created and multiply themselves in many beautiful variations. The result of this relation of the pilgrim to the symbol reveals a facet of what in a general and a rather conventional way is termed piety, the importance of which was recognized by the Church very early indeed. John Chrysostom, one of the earliest supporters of the icon, admired them because they were, he said, full of piety (1).
It is natural within the personal relation of the 'pilgrim' to the icon to enjoy an unlimited freedom. For while he stands in front of the icon, it is only he and the icon that confront one another; it is only to the icon that he can display the shadows existing in the endless landscape of his soul. The relationship is even stronger when the worshipper approaches the icon 'in fear and trembling', fully aware of its being a source of mystical grace. The personal understanding of the icon often goes far beyond the limits imposed by the doctrine of the official Church. For between the thoughts of the theologians and popular piety and its expressions there is often a great distance. Theologians argue for the correctness of the doctrine. But for the ordinary people the divine presence in all its manifestations is more important and more meaningful than theological controversies. Popular devotion becomes strong enough to assert itself in literature, in art, in rites. This is true above all for the art of the Middle Ages. Mythical lives of saints are written, legendary attributes of saints are created, a large amount of religious literary material labelled by the official Church as 'Apocrypha' comes into being, hymns are composed whose exaggerated, poetic language is often justified by the theologians as the result of poetic license, iconographic types are created which do not fully correspond to the official lessons of the Church. All these creations, however, correspond to and fulfill the inner needs of the people.
The problem of popular piety, devotion, as expressed in Christian art is indeed enormous and cannot be investigated before individual studies are carried out in many important areas. The world of icons, with which we are concerned here, is one of the most significant areas, offering to the student splendid possibilities to investigate this problem. But even in this area a discussion of the problems presupposes special studies. For example, there is a large number of icons termed by scholars 'popular icons'. That is, icons whose themes have a so-called 'folklore' character. They should number among the best pieces of evidence of popular devotion and yet thus far they have not been studied. Nevertheless valuable evindence can be drawn from a relatively well known body of material, that is, icons with familiar iconographic types or themes. And especially if one is to examine them from the point of view of popular piety rather than the point of view of the iconographic variants they represent or iconographic sources.
It is our intention to demonstrate the possibilities of such an approach within the limited scope of this article. Our choice is limited to some icon themes pertaining to the larger theme of the glorification of the Blessed Virgin in the Eastern Church by popular devotion. Some of these themes are illustrations of liturgical hymns which to a certain extent have drawn scholars' attention as far as their relation to the liturgy is concerned (2). Our own problem, however, is to investigate each artist's interpretations of these themes and the measure of his devotion to Mary.

1. EPITHETS ON ICONS AND APOCRYPHAL LITERATURE

The various epithets of Mary which appear on icons do not prove her glorification by necessity, but show the ways ordinary people looked upon her, and they speak of the special powers attributed to her. Few of them are cited here as representative examples. Wherever possible we have included the corresponding epithet found in the Latin Church: Kyria tôn angelon (Madonna degli angeli); Elpis tôn apelpismenon (Cf. Seniora della Esperanza); Skepi, the Russian 'Pokrov'; Ochseia antilepsis (Mater der perpetuo succursu); Paregoritissa (Madonna della consolazione); amolyntos (Immaculata); Panton he chara; Ponolytria; Kardiobastazousa; diasozousa; psychosostria, and many more (3). Many epithets derive from or recall church hymns, among which the Akathistos is the most popular (4). Some of the most common epithets of this category are: Chaire Maria; Kyria panton hymon (Mater Omnium, Nostra Signora, Notre Dame, Unsere Liebe Frau) etc. All these epithets express the feelings of the people towards the Mother of God and also the exceptional powers attributed to her. She is not only consoling, helping, protecting,

bringing joy, ending suffering and pain but she is the one who rescues people, preserves and saves them (diasozousa) – the saviour of souls (psychosotria). Can the ordinary people draw a line between some of these attributes and similar ones found on icons of Christ? The question can be best understood if, for example, one compares icons of Christ with the epithet psychosostis (saviour of souls) with the psychosostria on icons of Mary (5).
There are also epithets which derive from a miracle performed by an icon or from the place where an icon was discovered. Both the powers of Mary and her miraculous icons revealing her powers are reflected in a body of literature not included in the Canon of the official Church, termed Apocrypha (6). The study of this material alone would have sufficed to prove the glorification of Mary by the people.
Broadly speaking, this material comprises works very closely related to the cult of icons, and works which demonstrate the cult of Mary in general. We would like to mention only two examples from two different parts of the Christian East. The first is a collection of Aethiopic manuscripts, now in the British Museum, dating from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries, all dealing with miracles of Mary in which her icons play an important role (7). The manuscripts contain very expressive illustrations of the various stories. The other example is an earlier group of manuscripts, known in several tongues, a Greek version of which was already extant in the Middle Byzantine period, centered around the Descent of the Virgin Mary into Hell, or as it is known, Mary's Apocalypse. The existing manuscripts have no illustrations but the work has had an influence on art. Many of the epithets, cited above, can also be found in this text through which Mary, strictly speaking, retains her role as an intercessor to Christ. In the mind however of at least one illustrator, who apparently knew this text (as we have tried to show in another article), Mary is taking the place of Christ in an Anastasis composition by pulling the dead monk from his grave (8).
If we think of the early, simple representations of Mary and Child in encaustic icons and compare them to this fourteenth century Byzantine illumination, we begin faintly to perceive the contribution of popular piety to the cult of Mary and her glorification (9). The case is similar with the epithets. Between the simple epithet of 'Hagia Maria' found in early icons to Maria the 'Psychosostria' (the Saviour of Souls) there is a great difference born out of piety (10). In the first, she is simply a holy figure, in the last she has acquired Christ's attribute. Likewise certain special themes found on icons (and we do not discuss iconographic types here) can be singled out as manifestations of Mary's glorification.



1. Mother of God enthroned, Majestas Domini and Prophets, Sinai (After Sotiriou, Icônes du Sinai, 1, pl. 54).

2. MARY AND THE ROLE OF THE ANGELS

In early icons, of which the monastery of St. Catherine on Mount Sinai has rendered some splendid examples, Mary is shown flanked by saints and/or angels, iconographic combinations which persist to this day. In such icons she occupies the center of the composition, often seated on a throne, thus giving emphasis to her within the hierarchy of saints and angels (11). Angels and saints are given a secondary position. Naturally the theme occurs in monumental examples as well (12). The angels perform various functions. They can stand as guardians of honour. They can adore her by reclining on either side or be confined to medallions placed in the background on either side of her throne (13). They can carry for her the symbols of the Passion, thus composing parts of a type known as the Virgin of the Passion (14). They can witness her miracles and appearances, as for example in the theme of 'Pokrov' in Russian icons, or simply acting as witnesses of the divine world to which Mary belongs by virtue of her role in God's incarnation (15). However, in late icons the contribution of the angels to the glory of Mary becomes more active and we shall return to discuss some characteristic examples later.

3. MARY, THE PROPHETS AND THE EVANGELISTS' SYMBOLS

In an important icon in Sinai, dating from the late eleventh century, the enthroned Virgin holding the Christ child, occupies the middle of the composition under an arch on whoses spandrels are the guardian or honouring angels (Fig. 1) (16). Rich above the arch, however, a liturgical Majestas is represented. Christ, enclosed in a mandorla which is carried by the four symbols of the evangelists, is surrounded by seraphs and cherubs, i.e. the celestial powers. Figures of prophets and apostles frame the entire composition. The prophets hold open scrolls containing their prophecies pertaining to the coming of Christ. They are pointing to the Theotokos who



2. The Mother of God as the Fountain of Life with Prophets, Peter and Paul, Crete, Historical Museum Heracleion (After Muthmann, Mutter und Quelle, pl. 35, fig. 4).



3. a) The Tree of Jesse. b) Christ as the True Vine, Icons by Victor (1674), Venice, Hellenic Institut (After Chatzidakis, Icônes de Venise), pl. 71.



4. 'The Prophets from above', 'All Saints', 'Christ the True Vine', Triptych, seventeenth century, Munich, Gallery Neufert (After Neufert, Ikonen, Catalogue, 1973), fig. 219.

fulfilled their prophecies. George and Maria Sotiriou have correctly pointed out the general meaning of this composition. Mary's role in the Incarnation is stressed. The Christ, however, of the upper part of the composition, is the Christ of the Eucharistic Liturgy, the Majestas declaring the Epiphany of Christ, the union of the faithful with him, and the kingdom of God.
Thematically the icon is not unique. The association of Mary with a Liturgical Majestas, the symbols of the evangelists as part of this Majestas, prophets and apostles are found in the Bawit frescoes which probably date from the seventh century (17). The theme occurs also in Middle Byzantine manuscripts of the gospels which we discuss extensively in another study. In some of these manuscripts Mary is not simply associated with the Liturgical Majestas of Christ but in fact she is represented in a composition identical to that of Christ in Glory. Similar associations of Mary with Christ and the evangelists appear also in Coptic manuscripts (18).
For our discussions here two elements, found in the icon and the parallel examples mentioned, are important: the association of Mary with the prophets on the one hand, and her relation to the evangelists' symbols on the other. In the first element, i.e. the prophets and their scrolls, we see the roots of an independent composition depicting the Virgin and the prophets known throughout the Byzantine world, but which in the Hermeneia is termed 'The Prophets from above . . .' or 'The Prophets have proclaimed thee' (19). In other words, the representation became known under the opening verses of the Troparion, chanted on Mary's festival days, which condenses ideas referring to the Incarnation, revealed in prophetic visions, and whose text includes the following: 'Prophets (or the prophets from above) proclaimed you (the Virgin Mary) beforehand as the vase, the mystic stab (whereupon the unfading flower blossomed), the tablets of the Law, the Arc, the lamp, golden cencer and tabernacle, the dewey fleece (foreseen by Gideon) palace, ladder and throne of the King etc.'. Since the opening verses of this Troparion appear as a title of a theme in the Hermeneia and in late Byzantine examples, one may suggest that the association of this composition with the Troparion is a late one; or one can go even further and assume that the text of the Troparion was based on the composition. However, we are not concerned with this problem here.
The theme with or without the title of the Troparion is common in post-Byzantine examples, but it does not follow a fixed compositional scheme or iconographic type. Suffice that Mary is surrounded by prophets holding open scrolls, and often allegorical images from their visions, pictorial epithets of Mary, constituting her attributes. The whole composition, therefore, forms a declaration of the unique role Mary played in the plan of God, foreseen by the prophets (20). At times this composition can take the form of the Tree of Jesse. The Virgin holding the child Christ is represented on top of the tree, the prophets on its branches (21). An interesting, unusual variant of this scheme of composition is found in an icon, now in the Historical Museum at Herakleion, Crete, signed by the monk Christophoros and dated 1655 (Fig. 2). In this icon Mary is represented as the Zoodochos Pege placed, however, in the midst of a vine tree whose branches enclose the figures of twelve prophets. Two other prophets holding scrolls sit at the feet of the vine tree, which grows on hill and on either side of the tree we recognize the apostles Peter and Paul. Actually the icon represents a conflation of four distinct themes: the Virgin as the Fountain of Life, the 'Prophets from above', the Tree of Jesse, and the theme referring to Christ 'I am the true vine . . . ye are the branches' (Jhn. 15 : 1-8) (22).
If we compare separate representations of these themes, we shall realize that Mary has exchanged her place with that of her son in the theme of the True Vine. The tree in the Cretan icon is a vine tree, Mary is on top of it instead of Christ, and the medallions include prophets instead of apostles. For instance, two icons by Victor in Venice (1674), representing the tree of Jesse and Christ the True Vine (23) or a triptych in Munich ascribed to the Cretan School of the seventeenth century depicting on the left side 'the Prophets from above', in the middle 'All Saints' and on the right the theme of 'True Vine' with Christ, can testify to our observations (Figs. 3, 4) (24). In the Munich icon the theme of the 'Prophets from above' follows the composition of the Tree of Jesse but contrary to the Cretan icon in Heraclion, the tree is not a vine.
Muthmann, who brought the icon to our attention, suggests that hymnography may account for this reference to Mary or even her substitution for Christ (25). The hymn is included in the small Apodeipnon (Little Compline) read on the Fridays of Lent, which includes the staseis of the Akathistos Hymn. We cite the relevant verses: 'We praise Thee (Mother of God) and cry:

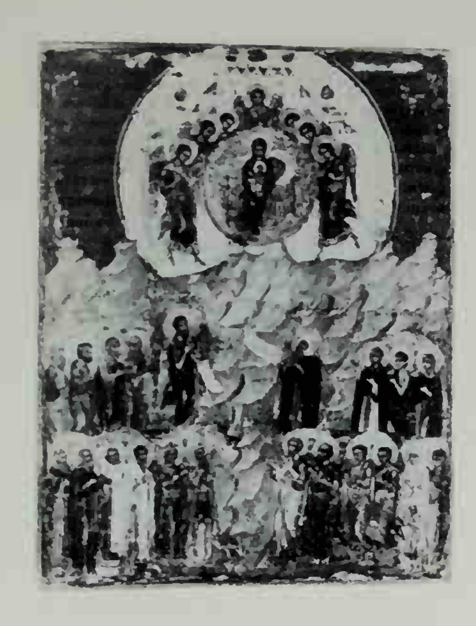
Hail . . . the true vine that produced the ripe cluster of grapes, dropping wine to gladden the souls of those who in faith glorify Thee. Most Holy Mother of God, Save us' (26).
Whether this is the influence of hymnography or a conscious conflation of themes with the explicit purpose the glorification of Mary, the resulting composition shows that this particular monk Christophoros in the year 1655 could not make a clear distinction between Mary and Christ. He created a composition glorifying Mary to the point of an exaltation whose boundaries cannot be defined. This icon is a splendid example of popular piety which does not understand or follow the strict precepts of Orthodox theology. But then has not the hymnographer done the same thing to a certain extent?



5. Mary is 'more honourable than the cherubim . . .', the Magnifical Hymn, Russian icon, seventeenth century, Antwerp, private coll. (After Haus der Kunst, Ikonen, Catalogue no. 233).

4. MARY WITHIN THE WORLD OF CELESTIAL POWERS

Mary's role in God's plan is not 'witnessed' by the prophets only. It is very meet to bless Mary for she is the holy and most spotless Mother of the incarnated Christ. She is higher than the cherubim which form God's throne in heavens, and more glorious than the Seraphim, who, standing before God, sing hymns to Him perpetually. This is a paraphrase of the Ancient Magnifical hymn to the Mother of God which found a place in the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom. Its text states that the Mother of God is 'more honourable than the Cherubim and glorious incomparably more than the Seraphim . . . indeed Mother of God, Thee do we magnify' (27). The hymn has found a place in the Little Compline and in hymns composed for Mary, such as the idiomelon attributed to Anatolios (c.A.D. 770) chanted at the lite of August 15, Feast of the Dormition, whose opening verses are the following: 'She who is higher than the heavens, more honourable than the Cherubim, and more glorious than all creation . . .' (28). In short, Mary is compared to the celestial powers and to all creation and she is given a higher, more glorious position.
This hymn is represented in Greek and Russian icons but not with a fixed iconography and often it is difficult to distinguish it from another hymn which we shall discuss shortly, the 'Over Thee, O full of grace, all creation rejoices' or 'Thou art the Joy of all creation', because in both cases the iconographic elements are similar. A Cretan icon of the sixteenth century in Copenhagen is probably one of the earliest depictions of the Magnifical hymn. The Virgin is in the center of a composition within an aureola, surrounded by angels and praised by apostles, saints and prophets, represented on the sides and below (29).
However, we can single out a representation which does not belong to this 'typified' rendering of the hymn. In a seventeenth century icon of the Stroganoff school, now in a private collection in Antwerp, we see the nine orders of angels, identified through inscription, as described by Dionysius the Areopagite, grouped around the image of Mary and Child (Fig. 5) (30). There are, on top: Dominions, Cherubim, and Powers; second row: Virtues, Seraphim and Thrones; third row: angels and principalities; fourth row: archangels. The image of Mary represented standing with the child Christ, much larger in scale than the figures of the celestial powers, is depicted within an aureola consisting of two superimposed stars adorned with stars and rays of light. It is set against a circle of light also marked with stars and rays. On the four red points of the inner star of the gloriola we see the four symbols of the evangelists. They are depicted as if carrying the image of Mary and Child. In other words the central part of the composition borrows its iconographic elements from a Majestas domini. But instead of Christ we have Mary and Child, thus the theme is turned into a Majestas Mariae, her glory seen within the hierarchy of angels. While this is a more literal interpretation of the verses of the hymn, 'she is more glorious than the cherubim and seraphim', the creator of this icon sees the glory of Mary as equal to that of Christ, for she is represented 'riding on the cherubim', that is on the throne destined for Christ, who, of course, is never forgotten but the emphasis of the theme is on the Virgin.
Both the borrowing of elements from Christ-iconography and the change of emphasis can be better understood if we look into the representation of the 'Hierarchy of Angels' according to a more 'orthodox' tradition found in the Hermeneia. In Church frescoes, in the principal cupola, the celestial powers are represented around the figure of Christ Pantocrator who is often shown riding the Four Apocalyptic Creatures. Mary and John the Baptist are included within the angelic hierarchy but in an intercession stance (31). The celestial powers are also represented in another theme, a laus known as 'Let every living creature praise the Lord', found in the narthexes of Byzantine Churches and on icons. The Lord riding on the four symbols of the evangelists is



6. Mary the Joy of All Creation, Russian Icon, seventeenth century, Munich, Gallery Neufert (After Neufert, Catalogue 1974, no. 24).



7. Mary the Joy of All Creation, Russian Icon, seventeenth century, Recklinghausen (After Skrobucha, Ikonenmuseum, Catalogue 1968, fig. 172.

surrounded by the angelic hierarchy often arranged in several circles. In this representation Mary is not included at all (32).

In neither of these themes, therefore, is there a special exaltation of Mary. Nevertheless, their consideration here helps us understand better the transformation which we see in the Russian icon. While the artist is concerned with Mary's position within the angelic powers, for the pictorialization of this idea he borrows iconographic elements from the iconography of Christ and by applying them to Mary, he exalts her in a very special way. Formally, at least, this composition recalls illustrations in Byzantine manuscripts in which Mary is shown with the child Christ riding on the four Apocalyptic creatures. The meaning, however, is different. In the gospel frontispieces it is the appearance of Christ and the message of the gospel that are stressed. But in the Russian icon it is the glorification of Mary above all celestial powers that is emphasized, naturally through her role in the Incarnation.

5. MARY, THE JOY OF ALL CREATION

The symbols of the evangelists, angels, prophets, apostles are principal elements in another composition illustrating a hymn by John of Damascus chanted as megalynarion in the Liturgy of Basil the Great, after Mary's commemoration in the Prayer of the Church; it reads partly: 'O full of grace, thou art the joy of all creation, of the assembly of the angels and the race of men; thy womb he (Christ) made his throne and he enlarged thy bosom broader than the heavens: thou hallowed temple, spiritual paradise . . . full of grace, thou art the joy of all creation, glory be to thee' (33). The theme is described in the Hermeinea and it is to be found in frescoes and Greek and Russian icons since the sixteenth century (34).

There is not an exact fixed scheme of composition. Its renderings can be very detailed or extremely simplified. The elements, recurring in the depiction of the theme, are: the assembly of the angels, the race of men, the image of the Temple and the concept of the Throne (these two are not always included), and often one or two hymnographers, John of Damascus and/or Joseph the Hymnographer (816-886).

The pictorialization of these motifs and their place in the composition vary, as do the settings. The variants, which may betray borrowing from other themes, bear in themselves evidence of individual interpretations of artists and of personal devotion. All artists see 'the race of men' and the concept of 'creation' as representing the terrestrial Church depicted in groups of saints one behind the other, arranged in zones. The groups are those mentioned in the Prayer for the Church in the Liturgy. According to St. John Chrysostom they are: Patriarchs, Apostles, Preachers, Evangelists, Martyrs, Confessors, Ascetics. St. Basil substitutes the Ascetics for the Doctors. Neither the order nor the representatives of each group are the same in each icon. For example, John the Forerunner can be given a special place (35). Or the Good Thief and the Prophet Elijah can be singled out; John Chrysostom, as the author of the principal liturgy, may lead one group on one side and Constantine another one on the opposite side (36). Certainly these variants show local preference, and the devotion of the artist or of those who commissioned the icon. The core of the composition remains the Mother of God with the child Christ, represented in an aureola and surrounded by angels and archangels.

But there are variations in the rendering of the central group, implying different interpretations. Some artists make a distinction of the celestial and terrestrial worlds. A row of rugged mountains provides the setting for the terrestrial Church. The aureola with Mary rests on top of these mountains which should be understood as a reference to the creation (Fig. 6) (37). Thus Mary exists above everything created. Other artists, however, do not place Mary on top of the 'created universe' but in the very heart of it, so that the terrestrial Church surrounds the glory of Mary, as we see in a seventeenth century Russian icon in Recklinghausen (Fig. 7) (38). Here Mary is represented alone standing within an aureola of light surrounded by archangels, stepping out of the realm of light as it were, with Christ as an Archpriest depicted above her. In passing, it should be pointed out that these two icons show two different concepts of the world. The one is more 'naturalistic' and follows the old Greek tradition. The other sees the world in terms of geometry and reflects concepts about the universe predominant in the Medieval West. But these observations are not directly related to our problem.

For other artists, however, this hymn of the creation to the Blessed Virgin is a hymn addressed to the Church in a strict sense. This is the interpretation of the artist who made the seventeenth

century Russian icon, mentioned earlier, now in Munich (39). He places the aureola of Mary with the child Christ in the very center of an actual church building (Fig. 8). This church, however, with its members, 'the assembly of the angels and the race of men', is set against a luminous background marked with stylized trees with flowers and birds flying around them. The sun, the moon and stars are beyond the segment of light, on the corners of the composition. It may be that this stylized garden alludes to the idea of Mary being the 'spiritual paradise' as mentioned in the hymn. But the astral world conveys the ideal of the Universe. Mary is the joy of all Creation. Center of this Church and of this Universe, in the icon, is the glory of Mary. Seated on a wide throne she holds the child Christ on her lap. A six-winged seraphim is represented left and right of the throne. She rests her feet on a seraph below just a Christ does in representations of the Liturgical Majestas (40). And on the four corners of the inner star are the evangelists' symbols identified as follows: Matthew with the angel, Mark with the eagle, Luke with the calf and John with the lion. Outside this aureola in a circle of dark green-blue sky eight seraphs hover.



8. Mary the Joy of All Creation, Russian Icon, seventeenth century, Munich, Gallery Neufert (After Neufert 1974), no. 40.

The central part of the composition recalls the thanksgiving prayer, recited by the priest in the anaphora of the liturgy. It is adressed to the ineffable, incomprehensible, invisible, unfindable God the 'master of all, and Lord of heaven and earth and of all creatures, visible and invisible', to Him who sits 'upon the throne of glory . . .' attended by 'thousands of Archangels and ten thousands of Angels, Cherubim and Seraphim', singing with 'unstilled hymns of glory . . . the triumphal song 'holy, holy, holy, Lord of Sabaoth, heaven and earth are full of thy glory' (41). Clearly the image of a Liturgical Majestas Domini has been transferred to a depiction of the exalted Mary. It is she who with the child Christ receives the triumphant hymn of Glory.

But in a seventeenth century Greek icon, now in the Byzantine museum in Athens, the Majestas Mariae seen in the Russian icon is rendered as a Majestas Ecclesiae. All the essential iconographic elements of the theme 'Thou art the joy of all creation' are here (Fig. 9) (42). The assembly of angels praising Mary as the 'hallowed temple', and the assembly of men, that is the entire Church arranged in a circle, surrounds the aureola of the Virgin. Enthroned, holding Christ, Mary is flanked by two adoring angels. On either side of the throne, in the circle of the Church, are the two hymnographers, John of Damascus on the left, and Joseph the Hymnographer on the right, holding open scrolls, presumably containing verses of their hymns to the Mother of God. But the four symbols of the evangelists do not carry the inner aureola with the enthroned Mary. Enclosed in medallions, they are attached to the outer circle, and so they carry the glory of the Church in the center of which is the aureola of Mary. Thus the entire Church is patterned after a Majestas composition explicitly stating that the glorification of the blessed Virgin means also the glorification of the Church.



9. Mary the Joy of All Creation, Greek Icon, seventeenth century, Athens, Byzantine Museum (detail) (After Musée byzantin, Athènes, Icônes) fig. on p. 40.

Saints frame the central part of the icon while episodes from the New Testament are depicted along the rim of the panel. In addition, two supplementary scenes are represented below the main composition, set in separate medallions with a representative of the celestial powers between them. On the left is the Hospitality of Abraham, and on the right St. Nicholas with the customary busts of Christ and Mary behind him. These subjects may not be unrelated to the central theme: the reference to the Trinity is a reference to the Divine economy which made the Invisible visible through Mary. The presence of St. Nicholas, if it has not a special, local significance, that is, if it is not directly related to the artist or the person who commissioned the icon, may signify the active participation of Mary in the life of the Church. For it was Mary who, according to an episode in the life of St. Nicholas, returned to him his omophorion (43).

If we have understood the complexities of the pictorial renderings of the theme of the glorification of Mary, of her praises and the various forms they take, as well as the constant borrowing of iconographic elements belonging to the iconography of Christ, we can understand better some icons which have combined more than one theme around the glory of the Mother of God. In some of them we can see the majesty of Mary together with that of Christ, like the magnificent icon by Klontzas in Venice from the end of the seventeenth century, published and discussed by Chatzidakis (Fig. 10) (44). He has shown that the icon's principal subjects are the Megalynarion, the Troparion 'Let every living creature praise the Lord' (another example of applying the glory of the Lord to that of Mary), All Saints, and other themes.



10. Mary the Joy of All Creation, Greek Icon by Klontzas, end of sixteenth century, Venice, Hellenic Institut (After Chatzidakis, Icônes de Venise), pl. 295.

Our discussion can also illuminate the iconographic sources and thus help us understand better the subject of another icon in Venice representing the theme 'All prophets have proclaimed thee'



11. 'All prophets from above,' Icon, middle 16th century, Venice, Institute Hellenic (After Chatzidakis, Icônes de Venise), pl. 9.

(Fig. 11) (45). The prophets holding their scrolls stand next to one another in the lower part of the composition. But, the representation of Mary with the child Christ, enclosed in a circle of light in which seraphim and cherubim hover and carried by the four symbols of the evangelists (Mary is here riding on the Cherubim), goes back to the theme 'Thou art the joy of all Creation'. Once more a liturgical Majestas Domini has been changed into a Majestas Mariae. Indeed these last icons recall representations of the Madonna in Glory found in Western art (46).

6. MARY AS THE BURNING BUSH

The principal iconographic elements of a Majestas Mariae which recur in the various themes discussed so far, return again in another theme, that of Mary as the Burning Bush in the manner it was developed in Russian icons from the sixteenth century on (the subject was quite popular in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries), under the impact of dogmatic and mystic ideas. Since this is mainly a typological theme it should perhaps have appeared earlier in the order and concept of our representation of the glorification themes. Yet its iconography presupposes the subjects already discussed, so its introduction at this point is more meaningful. In Byzantium the theme is strictly speaking typological depicting Moses' vision of the Burning Bush (47). In the art of Russian icons, while it retains its typological character, it is at the same time another rendering of the glorification of Mary (48). In most complete examples the representation is the following: the type of aureola which we have encountered so far, the two superimposed stars, encloses in its center a red aureola, symbols of fire, containing Mary with the child Christ. Around this red aureola and on the four points of the first star are angels holding symbols, typological representations of Mary, mentioned in the Akathistos hymn. On the points of the second star are the symbols of the four evangelists. This main composition in the form of an eight-pointed star is set against a circle arranged as if it were an open rose on the petals of which one sees once more angels holding attributes of Mary from the Akathistos. At the four corners of the background one sees Isaiah, Jacob, Ezekiel, and Moses in scenes prefiguring Mary's attributes. Prophets with open scrolls may be shown on the frame of the icon. In some examples, in the center of the upper part of the frame, there is a representation of God the Father, as we see in our illustrations, while on the opposite part of the frame there is a reclining Jesse normally belonging to a composition of the Tree of Jesse (49).
Evidently this composition comprises the theme of the Burning Bush as it was created in Byzantium, now limited to one of the background corners, the illustration of the Troparion 'The Prophets have proclaimed thee', the Akathistos hymn, the Tree of Jesse and the liturgical theme of a Majestas Mariae or Mary riding on the Cherubim. The assembly of all these themes around the figure of Mary gives further emphasis to her person. The entire representation refers not only to the prefiguration and imagery of the virgin birth, it also constitutes a glorification of Mary within the plan of God's incarnation. Her exaltation is so high that finally Mary reaches the throne of God and receives the crown of glory.

7. THE CORONATION OF THE VIRGIN MARY

It has been said that the theme of the Coronation of Mary is unknown to the Christian East. This assertion requires a qualification. It is correct in that the Coronation theme does not take in the East the form which it often takes in the West it was first developed, probably in France in the eleventh and twelfth centuries (50). In the East the subject develops between the themes discussed above and is essentially a post-Byzantine occurence. In its simplest rendering the Coronation is carried out by angels. In a Greek icon, for example, of about 1600, now in Munich, the enthroned Virgin with the child Christ on her lap is crowned by two angels standing left and right behind her throne (51). In itself this rendering of the theme is not of special significance since the motif appears in representations of saints in early icons (52). In another variant of the theme, found in an icon in the Byzantine Museum, Athens, and painted by Macarios of Galatista in 1784, Mary, who nourishes the Child, is crowned by Michael and Gabriel (53). Represented kneeling on clouds above her, they set a 'stemma' on her head. Mary is crowned in a similar way in a monumental icon of the Ionian School (c. 1700), now in Amsterdam (54). The act of the Coronation performed in these two last icons is much more ceremonial than in the composition mentioned above.
In an icon, now in the monastery of Toplos in Crete, depicting Mary as the Unfading Rose,

painted by the hieromonk Stamatios (1771), we see the enthroned Mary in the midst of a rosebush flanked by Adam and Eve and a number of symbols – all Mary's pictorial attributes – mostly found in hymns composed for her (55). Two angels unfolding a scroll with the opening lines of the theme are crowning her. Above this 'Coronation', in a realm pictorially designed as heaven, there is a representation of the Holy Trinity in the Western manner. That is, God the Father as the Ancient of Days and God the Son in the form of the Incarnated Christ are seated, while the Holy Ghost is represented between them in the form of a dove. In this case, it is as if the Holy Trinity witnesses this crowning of Mary. The act, however, acquires another significance when it is carried out by the Trinity itself, as we see in a seventeenth century icon by the priest Skordiles in the Byzantine Museum, Athens (56). The icon illustrates the following hymn: 'Divine power for her conceiving then, overshadowed her who knew not wedlock, and showed her fruitful womb as a fertile field to all those who desire to reap their salvation' (57). Mary is represented kneeling, crossing her arms on her breast, while two archangels are stretching a mantle behind her, a symbol of the shadow of God that fell upon her. At the same time Christ and God the Father stretch their hands through the clouds of their heavenly habitation and set a crown on Mary's head. And in another icon in Patmos, first published by Kalokyres and discussed by Chatzidakis recently, the theme 'The prophets from above' is combined with Mary's Coronation (58). In this case the crown is set on Mary by the Trinity represented above in the form of a three-faced person.

The meaning of this theme is clear. It represents the crowning glory of Mary. Such representations come close in concept to some parallel Western representations, as, for example, a tapestry of the year 1485 from Brussels, often called 'Mary's Coronation', now in the Louvre (59).

Scholars have correctly argued on behalf of Western influences on the art of the Eastern Church. The argument, however, is immaterial. Influences do not penetrate the soul of the artist or of the people unless there is fertile ground for them. And the idea of a Majestas Mariae, her enthronement and her coronation have deep roots in the Orthodox East, as they do in the Latin West. The hymns composed for the glorification of Mary belong to the official Church literature. Along side it, however, there is the apocryphal literature, a document of Christian piety, which penetrated the world of Christian art, as we have already noted at the beginning of this study, and it was also used by the defenders of faith. John of Damascus and Gregory Palamas, to mention two examples, in their sermons on the Dormition of the Virgin, have borrowed from the apocryphal literature; the description of Mary's translation into the heavens in these homilies is a case in point. John of Damascus tells us that Mary 'ascended to the very royal throne of the son of God' (60). And Gregory Palamas states that '. . . Mary became the Queen of every earthly and celestial creature because of the ineffable birth . . . And now, having the heavens as her suitable dwelling, as a suitable kingdom, where she was translated from the earth today, she stands beside, to the right hand side of the King of All. She is clad in golden garments, adorned in many colours, in accordance with David's prophecy about her' (61).

We need not dwell on these texts, because the prophet's words, cited by Gregory Palamas, had found a place in the rite of the prothesis in the arrangement of the bread-particles on the eucharistic pattern (62). The officiant places the particle of bread destined for the Mother of God to the right hand side of the Lamb of God. While he is doing this, he adds the following: 'At thy right hand stood the Queen dressed in golden vesture adorned with many colours' (Ps. 44.10) (63). Thus the blessed Mary as a Queen stands at the right of Jesus, the King of the Universe. The details of her coronation were left to popular imagination and to each artist's degree of piety and personal devotion.

All these themes found in icons, which we have attempted to discuss here from a different point of view and relate to a central theme, that of the Glorification of Mary, have shown various degrees of this Majestas and various degrees of piety and devotion to the Virgin. However, no matter how far this devotion goes, however many elements of Christ's iconography are applied to Mary (her riding on the four symbols of the evangelists is a principal example of this borrowing), her exaltation is the result of her role in man's redemption and of her great sanctity. More particularly, her glory, as seen in these icons, is that of the Triumphant Church. In some of these icons, particularly in those representing the theme of 'Mary is the joy of the Universe', we must understand the doctrine concerning the Communion of Saints. Partly, at least, these icons

are pictorial counterparts of the holy paten with the Eucharistic bread (64). The Church militant is missing. But then these are icons of triumph, glory and praise.

NOTES

1. 'And I have liked the encaustic painting which is full of piety', PG, 94, col. 1400; cf. G. Galavaris, Icons from the Elvehjem Art Center, University of Wisconsin, Madison 1973, pp. 13-22; and G. Wunderle, Um die Seele der heiligen Ikonen, Würzburg 1937.
2. J. Myslivec, 'Liturgické hymny jako náměty ruských ikon', Byzantinoslavica, 3 (1931), 462-99; problems of hymn-illustrations have been discussed repeatedly by K. Weitzmann, see his 'The Selection of Texts for Cyclic Illustration in Byzantine Manuscripts', Byzantine Books and Bookmen, A Dumbarton Oaks Colloquium, Washington D.C. 1975, pp. 102 ff; see also below, no. 10.
3. In general, see Dionysiou Fourna, Hermeneia tes zographikes technes, ed. A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, St. Petersburg 1909, p. 288; N.P. Kondakov, Ikonografija Bogomateri, 2 vols, St. Petersburg 1914, 1915 (it remains fundamental on the subject); C. Cacchelli, Mater Christi, 4 vols., Rome 1946-54; for special icons with some of the epithets cited above and more recent bibliography H.P. Gerhard, Welt der Ikonen, Recklinghausen 1970, 3rd ed., pl. VIII; M. Chatzidakis, Eikones tes Patmou, Athens 1978, nos 16, 87, 90, 97, 101, 106, 116, 121; G.M. Lechner OSB, 'Zur Ikonographie der 'Gottesmutter des Zeichnes'', Kunst der Ostkirche, Exhibition Catalogue, Stift Herzogenburg, Vienna 1977, pp. 77-92; also K.D. Kalokyres, He Theotokos eis ten eikonographian anatoles kai thyseos, Thessalonike 1972, pp. 35-40.
4. In general, see R. Schlötteres, 'Akathistos', in Lexikon Kirche und Theologie, 2nd ed. 1, col. 235 with bibliography; also S. Eustratiades, He Theodokos eis ten hymnographian, Paris-Chennevière sur Marne 1930.
5. B. Rothemund, Handbuch der Ikonenkunst, 2nd ed., Munich 1966, p. 207, the icons are in Yougoslavia. For good reproductions, one in colour, and the most recent bibliography, see K. Weitzmann, M. Chatzidakis, S. Radojčić, Die Ikonen, Sinai, Griechenland und Jugoslavien, Herrsching-Ammersee 1977, pls. on pp. 146, 184.
6. For texts and commentaries in general see C. von Tischendorf, Evangelia apocrypha, 2nd ed., Leipzig 1876; Ch. Michel, Evangiles apocryphes. II. L'évangile de l'Enfance, 2nd ed., Paris 1924; E. Hennecke-E. Schneemelcher, Neutestamentliche Apodryphen, 3rd ed., 2 vols., Tübingen 1969, 1964, translated into English as New Testament Apocrypha, 2 vols., London 1963, 1965.
7. See W.E.A. Budge, Legends of our Lady Mary, the perpetual Virgin and her mother Hannâ, translated from the Ethiopic Manuscripts collected by King Theodore at Makdalâ and now in the British Museum, Oxford 1933; Id., One Hundred and Ten Miracles of Our Lady Mary, Oxford 1933.
8. G. Galavaris, 'Mary's Descent into Hell: A Note on the Psalter Oxford, Christ Church Arch. W. Gr. 61', Byzantine Studies/Etudes Byzantines, 4 (1977), 189-94. To the bibliography included in this article the following references, omitted in the final printing by accident, should be added: M.R. James, Apocrypha Anecdota, Cambridge 1893, pp. 115-16; R.M. Dawkins, 'Kretike Apokalypsis tes Panagias', Kretika Chronika, 2 (1948), 487-500; more information in H. Gross-J. Michell, 'Apokalypsen', Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche, 2nd ed., col. 702, and Hennecke-Schneemelcher, New Testament Apocrypha, 2, pp. 751-52.
9. G.A. Wellen, Theotokos, eine ikonographische Abhandlung über das Gottesmutterbild in der frühchristlichen Zeit, Utrecht-Antwerp 1961; R. Lange, Das Marienbild der früher Jahrhunderte, Recklinghausen 1969.
10. For the epithet 'Hagia Maria' and examples see K. Weitzmann, 'Eine vorikonoklastische Ikone des Sinai mit der Darstellung des Chairete', Tortulae; Studien zu altschristlichen und byzantischen Monumenten, Römische Quartalschrift für christliche Altertumskunde und Kirchengeschichte, 30. Supplementheft, Rome-Freiburg-Vienna 1966, 317-25, esp. pp. 318-19; Cf. also W. Delius, Geschichte der Marienverehrung, Munich-Basel 1963.
11. For example, see the magnificent sixth century icon with Mary, saints and angels in Sinai, discussed and reproduced in K. Weitzmann, The Monastery of St. Catherine at Mount Sinai,

The Icons, I: From the Sixth to the Tenth Century, Princeton, N.J. 1977, no. B3, pls. IV-VI, XLIII-XLVI.

12. The examples are several and known, an early one can at least be mentioned here: the apse mosaic of the church Panaghia Angeloktistos in Kiti, Cyprus, reproduced in W.F. Volbach-J. Lafontain-Dosogne, Byzance und der christlichen Osten, Propyläen Kunstgeschichte, vol. 3, Berlin 1968, fig. 9.

13. In general see Rothemund, Ikonenkunst, pp. 264, 266, 267, 270; G. and M. Sotiriou, Icônes du Mont Sinai, 1 (Plates), 2 (Text), Athens 1956, 1958, 1, figs. 191, 226; 1000 Jahre Bulgarische Ikonen, Exhibition Catalogue, Munich 1978, pls. 14r, 30, 31, 43, 49.

14. The type known already since the twelfth century is common in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, see M. Chatzidakis, Icônes de Saint Georges des Grècs, Venice 1962, no. 20.

15. For the type, examples, and bibliography see Galavaris, Icons, no. 7; Rothemund, Ikonenkunst, pp. 290-91.

16. Sotiriou, Icônes, 1, figs. 54, 55; 2, p. 73.

17. J. Cledat, Le Monastère et la Nocropole de Baouît, Mémoire Institut Française du Caire, 12, Cairo 1904, 73ff, 517ff, pls. XL-XLIV (Chapel VII); Volbach-Lafontain-Dosogne, op. cit., p. 360, pl. L (Chapel VI).

18. M. Cramer, Koptische Buchmalerei, Recklinghausen 1964, pl. VIII; also F. van der Meer, Majestas Domini, Théophanies de l'Apocalypse dans l'art chrétien, Rome 1938, remains fundamental. George Galavaris, The Illustrations of the Prefaces in Byzantine Gospels (Byzantina Vindobonensia, XI), Vienna 1979.

19. Hermeneia, pp.146, 220, 282; Feast of the Presentation of Mary to the Temple, November 21, Menaion Noembriou, Athens n.d., p. 214; Kalokyres, op. cit., pp. 191-94.

20. For a study of the theme see D. Mouriki, 'Ai biblikai proeikoniseis tes Panagias eis ton troullon tes Peribleptou tou Mistra', Archaeologikon Deltion, 25 (1970), 1971, 217-51.

21. See an example in Galerie Ilas Neufert, Ikonen, Catalogu, Munich 1973, no. 219.

22. For the iconography of Mary as the Fountain of Life in general see T. Velmans, 'Iconographie de la Fontaine de Vie', Synthronon, Bibl. Cahiers archéologiques, 2, Paris 1968, 8ff; D. Pallas, 'He Theotokos Zoodochos Pege', Archaeologikon Deltion, 26 (1971), 1972; for a more recent and more profound discussion see Fr. Muthmann, Mutter und Quelle, Basel 1975, pp. 354ff.

23. See Chatzidakis, Icônes de Venise, nos. 128, 129 and a colour-reproduction in M. Manoussacas, A. Paliouras, Guide to the Museum of Icons and the Church of St. George, Venise 1976, pl.IV.

24. See above, no. 21.

25. Muthmann, op. cit., p. 360, pl. 35, fig. 4; also Russian icon from 1668 in Moscow, V.I. Antonova-N.E. Mneva, Gosudarstvennaia Tret'iakovskaia gallereia. Katalog drevnerusskoi zhivopisi, 2 vols. Moscow 1963, 2, no. 912; A. Thomas, 'Maria die Weinrebe', Kurtrier. Jahrbuch, 10 (1970), 30-55; Id., 'Weinrebenmadonna, Lexikon der christlichen Ikonographie', 4, 1972, cols. 489-91.

26. See The Akathist Hymn and Little Compline, The Faith Press, London n.d., p. 45. Similar hymns exist in the Latin West. See G.G. Meersseman OP., Der Hymnos Akathistos in Abendland, Spicilegium Friburgense, vols. 2, 3, Freiburg i. Schweiz 1958, 1960; Muthmann, op. cit., pp. 359, 360.

27. For the translation see The Orthodox Liturgy, Fellowship of St. Alban and St. Sergius, London 1939 with several reprints, p. 75.

28. Little Compline, p. 60; Menaion Augustou, Athens n.d., p. 108; for the complete text and problems concerning the identity of Anatolios, see P.N. Trempelas, Ekloge tes orthodoxou hymnographias, Athens 1949, pp. 235-236.

29. H. Kjellin, Marie Gloria, Copenhagen 1926; Rothemund, Ikonenkunst, p. 283.

30. Haus der Kunst, Ikonen, 13-19. Jahrhundert, Catalogue, Munich 1969, no. 233; another example, a Russian icon from 1602, in the Tretyakov Gallery, published by Myslivec, op. cit., pp. 493-95, pl. XII; the icon includes the theme 'It is right to praise thee'; Antonova-Mneva, 2, no. 692.

31. Hermeneia, pp. 215, 261.

32. Ibid., p. 220. For examples in icons see Myslivec, op. cit., pls. IX, X; cf. Chatzidakis,

Icônes de Venise, no. 50; Horologion to mega, ed. Apostolikes Diakonias, Athens 1973, pp. 99, 100, P. 148.
33. See The Orthodox Liturgy, p. 67.
34. Hermeneia, pp. 246, 247; Myslivec, op. cit., 491, 492; Rothemund, Ikonenkunst, p. 282.
35. Galerie Ilas Neufert, Ikonen, Catalogue, Munich 1974, pl. 24; also an eighteenth century icon discussed by Myslivec, op. cit., pp. 491-93, pl. XI.
36. Galerie Ilas Neufert, Ikonen, Catalogue, Munich 1974, pl. 40.
37. Ibid., pl. 24; also V.H. Elbern, Ikonen aus der frühchristlich-byzantischen Sammlung staatliche Museen preusischer Kulturbesitz-Berlin, Berlin 1970, no. 20.
38. H. Skrobucha, Ikonenmuseum Recklinghausen, Catalogue, 4th ed., Recklinghausen 1968, pl. 172.
39. See above, no. 36.
40. See for instance the icon, Christ in Glory, c. 1500, in M. van Rijn, Important Icons from Private Collections, Exhibition Catalogue, Amsterdam 1977, no. 8.
41. F.E. Brightman, Liturgies Eastern and Western, I: Eastern Liturgies, Oxford 1896, reprinted 1965, pp. 321-24.
42. See Weitzmann et al., Die Ikonen, p. 83, pls. 118, 119.
43. Cf. G. Anrich, Hagios Nikolaos. Der heilige Nikolaos in der griechischen Kirche, 2 vols., Leipzig-Berlin 1913, 1917, 2, pp. 393ff; K. Weitzmann, 'Fragments of an Early St. Nicholas Triptych on Mount Sinai', Deltion christianikes archaeologikes hetaireias, per. 4, 4 (1964), timetikos Sotiriou, 1-23.
44. Chatzidakis, Icônes de Venise, no. 55.
45. Ibid., no. 10.
46. Cf. for example, Madonna in Glory by Annibale Carracci (1590-1609), in the Gallery of Bologna.
47. For an example see a fourteenth century icon in Sinai, Sotiriou, Icônes, 1, pl. 220; other examples and discussion, K. Weitzmann, 'Loca Sancta and the Representational Arts of Palestine', Dumbarton Oak Papers, 28 (1974), pp. 52ff.
48. Rothemund, Ikonenkunst, pp. 278, 279; also Ch. Marsaux, La Vierge au buisson ardent, 1958; Lechner, Kunst der Ostkirche, pp. 85, 86.
49. For an example see icon of the Palech school, c. 1800, in B. Rothemund, Katalog des Ikonenmuseums Schloss Autenried, Munich 1974, no. III, 18. For the example reproduced here see Van Rijn, op. cit., no. 25.
50. A. Conan, Le couronnement de la Vierge au Moyen-Age en France, dans la Sculpture, la Peinture et les Miniatures, Paris 1940.
51. Neufert, Ikonen, 1974, pl. 288.
52. K. Weitzmann, The Icon, Holy Images Sixth to Fourteenth Century, New York 1978, pl. 37.
53. Musée byzantin, Athènes, Icônes, Paris 1970, fig. on p. 62.
54. Van Rijn, op. cit., no. 16. The theme of angels crowning the Virgin is common in Western art, for examples see a polyptych in Bologna by Antonio Vivarini, and a triptych by Bartolomeo Vivarini in Met. Mus. N.Y., R. Palluchini, I Vivarini, Venice n.d., pls. 90, 154.
55. Kalokyres, op. cit., pp. 205, 206, pl. 290.
56. Ibid., op. cit., pl. 289, b.
57. The Little Compline, p. 20.
58. Kalokyres, op. cit., p. 193, pl. 272; Chatzidakis, Patmos, no. 113.
59. Muthmann, op. cit., pp. 365ff.
60. PG, 96, col. 717. The theme of Mary's Translation (not to be confused with the Dormition) in Byzantine art and literature deserves greater consideration than it has received hitherto, see A. Wenger, L'Assomption de la Vierge dans la tradition byzantine du VIe au Xe siècle, Paris 1955.
61. PG, 151, col. 465. Cf. C. von Dischendorff, Apocalypses apocryphae, Leipzig 1896, pp. 95-112.
62. G. Galavaris, Bread and the Liturgy, Madison-Milwaukee-London 1970, pp. 62ff.
63. M.M. Solovey, O.D.B.M., The Byzantine Divine Liturgy, Washington D.C., 1970, pp. 125ff.
64. Galavaris, Bread and the Liturgy, fig. 35.

The Feast-Day Cycles in Russian Icon Painting: Their Function and Development of Style

by Prof. Dr. Walter Felicetti-Liebenfelsz

Within the iconography of the Eastern Orthodox Church, scenes from the life of our Lord and that of the Virgin Mary are presented in a clearly established order to give visual expression to the various stages of the yearly liturgical cycle. This is done by means of a selection of twelve feasts, known in Greek as the Dodekaortion, in honour of our Lord or of the Virgin, developed in the mid-Byzantine period from Syrian and ancient Palestinian patterns. These twelve feasts related to the following themes: the Annunciation, the Nativity, the Presentation in the Temple, the Baptism of Christ, the Resurrection of Lazarus, the Transfiguration, the Entry into Jerusalem, the Crucifixion, the Descent into Hell, the Ascension, Pentecost and the Death of Mary or "Dormition". The basic content of these feasts could, however, be supplemented by other incidents taken either from the Gospels or from Church tradition. Thus we often find representations of the Birth of John the Baptist, the Birth of the Virgin Mary, Mary's Entry into the Temple, Christ's Appearance to the doubting Thomas, Jesus washing his Disciples' Feet, the Last Supper, the Three Marys at the Tomb, Christ's Body being removed from the Cross, the

Mourning over the Body of Christ and of the Exaltation of the Cross (Hypsosis), to mention only the most important examples.
In accordance with the liturgical significance of the cycle, it was only natural that the pictures should be given a special place in the Byzantine Templon and the Russian Iconostasis. The iconostatis consisted of several tiers of pictures. Perhaps the best example of their simple, classical arrangement are to be seen in some West Ukranian churches, although these date from the 16th century or even later. In the lowest tier, round the main door, are grouped the pictures of Christ and the Virgin Mary, together with the "local" icons. Then follows a narrower tier accommodating the fixed or movable feast-day panels. Above this comes the main tier of the deesis with the apostles and angels in attendance. The whole is completed by a final tier with a painted crucifix showing the two Marys and the disciple John on either side. This order was possibly that adhered to in the Templon, since the feast-day panels were placed at an accessible height and could easily be removed and placed on a stand (proskynitarion) for adoration on the appropriate feast-day.
The adoption of the Templon in Russia in the 14th century or perhaps even earlier, which stimulated (at least in part) the use of wood for building, ultimately led to the enormous classical iconostases of the 15th century. These had five tiers, the uppermost the Old Testament Patriarchs, followed by the Prophets with "Our Lady of the Sign" in the centre. The third tier was devoted to a series of feast-day panels of which the number depended on the space available; sixteen of twenty-four are not uncommon.
The solemnity of these great picture panels is beautifully demonstrated by the iconostasis in the Chapel of the Birth of the Virgin in St. Sophia's Cathedral in Novgorod and an even more magnificent example is to be found in the Church of the Annunciation in the Kremlin, in which the principal panels are by Theophan the Greek and the feast-day panels by Rubliev and Prochor, the latter dating from 1504.
All else that remains of the feast-day panels from the great era of the Novgorod and Moscow schools comes from lost or fragmented iconostases. The oldest remains date from the 13th century, when there was as yet apparently no established order for the arrangement of such pictures.

Into a separate category fall the small iconostases (196 x 56 cm, for example) designed for family devotions in private houses or on journeys. They could be folded and did not usually consist of more than three tiers, the upper- and lowermost tiers with the Old Testament Patriarchs omitted. Where sixteen feast-day panels are found, the centre is usually emphasized by representations of the Crucifixion and the Descent into Hell so that the Lord's deepest humiliation is followed by the triumph of the Resurrection at Easter.
Also destined for private use were the smaller panels or polyptyches on which either the whole Dodekaortion or parts of it, usually in groups of four pictures, are to be seen. The use of such panels became customary in the mid-Byzantine period and could be traced back to the Ampullae of Monza, where the principal events from the life of Christ were depicted in minute reliefs and arranged as a cycle as they would appear to pilgrims to the Holy Land at the sites of the Theophanies.
The enrichment of feast-day icon-painting and its grouping into picture-cycles can best be observed by considering certain diptyches or tablet-icons dating from the 16th century, mostly from the Novgorod school. In two famous "tabletki", one now in a private collection in Oslo and the other formerly in the St. Sophia Cathedral in Novgorod, one can see that a narrative Passion cycle is emerging. The subject-matter is divided between two panels, each measuring 24 x 19 cm, the front and reverse sides bearing four pictures respectively, so that the Passion of our Lord is depicted in sixteen scenes. These begin with the Last Supper and end with the Three Marys at the Tomb of Christ. In between come the following scenes: Jesus washing the Disciples' Feet, Gethsemane, the Arrest, Judas' Kiss, Jesus before Caiaphas, Peter's Denial, Jesus before Pilate, the Scourging, Jesus mocked by the Roman Soldiers, Jesus carrying the Cross, Jesus being nailed to the Cross, Joseph of Arimathaea asking Pilate for the Body of Jesus, the Removal of Jesus' Body from the Cross and the Mourners at the Tomb. Several of these scenes are clearly borrowed from Western religious painting.
In the second of the two "tabletki" mentioned, other motifs besides the Passion are included, for

instance, the Three Young Men in the Burning Fiery Furnace, the Vision of Peter of Alexandria, Constantine and Helena, etc. The Deposition of the Virgin's Girdle and Robe relates to a feast-day of the Virgin on which the bringing of the Virgin's robes from Jerusalem to Constantinople on 2nd July is commemorated.
Of a completely different type are the "six-day" icons, called in Greek "Hexaemeron" and in Russian "Shestodnev", in which a number of feast-day panels are allocated to days of the week. According to Cyril the Philosopher, these week-day icons were used for religious instruction. If we look at the famous example which is ascribed to the school of Dionisy, we find, starting at the top left, Christ's Descent into Hell representing Easter Saturday, the feast which leads on to Easter Sunday and the Resurrection, thus lending a tone of worship to the whole week. The Gathering of the Archangels in the next panel symbolizes Monday, the Baptism in Jordan Tuesday, the Annunciation Wednesday, Jesus washing the Disciples' Feet Thursday and the Crucifixion Friday. In the centre of the second tier is a larger space accommodating a representation of the enthroned Christ with the Virgin, John the Disciple and the Archangels on either side in the manner of a deesis. This heavenly vision represents Sunday. Below, in bright arches, in accordance with a liturgical hymn, can be seen the Gathering of All Saints as a picture of Saturday, the Day of Preparation.
Feast-day cycles which follow a scheme similar so that of the biographical icons showing legends of the saints are grouped around a central panel. Instead of scenes from the life of a saint, however, the border pictures represent different feasts of the Lord in which the biblical subject-matter may extend to as many as twenty-four or more feasts. Where the Old Testament Trinity in the form of the three angels visiting Abraham and Sarah occurs, the feast of Pentecost is symbolized since, in the absence of a separate feast of the Trinity, this was celebrated at Pentecost. The focal point of the whole was the central picture around which the border pictures were arranged. This central picture was usually devoted to Easter, the Feast of Feasts surpassing all other events in the life of Christ. For this feast, a very characteristic composition established itself in which the Lord's Descent into Hell and the Ascension are shown together in a single picture, embodying the concept that Katábasis and Anástasis are inseparably bound up with each other.
The essence of Byzantine form is traditionalism. Following the adoption of Orthodoxy in Russia, traditionalism became the strict criterion for all representations of biblical subject matter. The famous bronze doors on the West side of the Cathedral of the Birth of Mary in Susdal, for example, which date from as early as 1225, include in their twenty-eight picture sections the feast of the Lord in the basic arrangement now familiar to us.
Whatever was left of this strictly tradition-bound Byzantinism after the Tartar invasion of 1238 subsequently diminished in power and authority. Novgorod, for example, escaped destruction but suffered isolation and a brutalizing of life. All artistic activity came to a near-standstill. Only gradually did creativity reappear and begin to revive and reinterpret the extinguished or disintegrated Byzantine inheritance.
A good example of this revival is the 14th century icon showing the Birth of the Virgin, now in the Tretyakov Gallery, and which probably represented a feast-day on a primitive iconostasis. The expressive power of this icon is magnificent. Clearly outlined abstractions divide the whole into severe, glowing areas of colour against which the expressions and attitudes of the figures gain an evocative effect. The arrival of Teophan the Greek in Novgorod in 1378 marked both a turning point and a new departure for art in this northern area. In his remarkable frescoes Theophan developed a boldly dramatic style, whereas in his icons he remained faithful to the high standards of the Palaeologan era, as demonstrated in his "Our Lady of the Don".
The reverse side of this panel, showing the Decease of the Virgin, is also ascribed to him. Here, however, Theophan drastically simplified this otherwise rich iconographic theme, only emphasizing those elements which served to create a powerfull effect.
When "the Greek" moved to Moscow in 1390, the central Russian school also entered its period of greatness. Theophan's genius became linked with that of the much younger Rubliev and in 1405 they together painted the iconostasis in the Cathedral of the Annunciation in Moscow. The feast-day panels described to Rubliev are already a manifestation of that visionary, transcendental artistic view which had its roots in the Palaeologan style but went far beyond it. This is also true of the feast-day icons in the Cathedral of the Assumption in Vladimir, also

ascribed to Rubliev. However, he reaches the apex of his sublime style in the feast-day panels he painted together with a team of artists in 1425-27 for the Church of the Trinity in Zagorsk. Here we find such incomparable masterpieces as the Visit of the Holy Women to the Tomb.

In the second half of the 15th century the friendly rivalry and interaction between the Moscow and Novgorod schools produced some significant examples of feast-day panels.

Later, the spiritualized style of painting which followed in Rubliev's wake reached a new summit with Dionisii (died circa 1502). In about 1500 he painted the feast-day panels for the Obnorski Monastery in Vologda, nothing of which, unfortunately, is preserved. However, the six-day icon described earlier gives us a glimpse of his style, which is most clearly to be seen in the frescoes for the Ferapontov Monastery. He is a master in the rhytmic arrangement of figures. His colours are gently radiant and the grace and slenderness of the figures has increased so that the spiritual element contributed by Rubliev is developed even further. The mannerisms of late Byzantine style recede, shrouded in an atmosphere of muted luminosity.

If we return to the Novgorod school of the 16th century, we find that the style has become more compact, more drastic in movement, showing a tendency to return to the mannerism of late Byzantine style. In order to show which elements of style are involved, we shall consider an older example from the 14th century, the famous Mosaic Diptych in the Cathedral Museum in Florence, where the twelve feasts of the Lord are shown on two small panels measuring 23.5 x 17.5 cm each.

In this small masterpiece the characteristics of Byzantine mannerism are particularly well exemplified: the scenes with figures are stirred by dramatic movement, even the background elements of architecture or fantastic cliff formations being drawn into the current. The attitudes of the figures are often unnatural, complicated and violent in their movement. Folds in garments are typically represented in the form of sinuous or zig-zag lines. Also worthy of note are the bold, upward flow of robes and the exaggerated points at the corners of the garments. The artist has made a deliberate attempt to portray the emotions of his subjects in their facial expressions and physical attitudes.

These remarkable characteristics of expression were adopted again and again by Russian icon painters and adapted in various ways. In the time of Ivan the Terrible, who died in 1584, this refined but tormented artistic expression is to be seen against the background of the rigours of despotism and the subsequent lessening of personal creative power. One can feel the gloomy pressure, the heavy hand under which all art was suffering.

The reconstruction of the city of Moscow which followed the terrible fire of 1547, when the best artists, and especially those from Novgorod, were brought in, gave painting a new lease of life. During the rebuilding of the badly damaged Cathedral of the Annunciation in the Kremlin, the picture-panels in the small Upper Chapel were totally restored (1563-64).

Particularly to be admired are the feast-day panels, in which the wonderful colours were produced by the "fused" method. This is a refined technique whereby coloured areas and shading are merged into each other by the use of glazes.

Alongside this highly refined Moscow style of painting, another trend was establishing itself under the influence of the Moscow Metropolitan Makarios (died 1563), a deliberate return to the good old traditional style of painting. Under this influence many feast-day panels were produced which, in their timeless expression, can hardly be distinguished from the best works of the 15th century.

With the development of a more refined style of living, the court of the Czars, the nobility and wealthy merchants became sponsors to icon painters and so the Stroganov School came into being. Its greatest achievements were reached between 1580 and 1620 but its influence continued into the 18th century. Its style was directed towards pomp and private interest and marked by a desire for the affective, the artificial and the complex. Rich gilding and minute detail were used to enchant the eye of the purchaser. The human ideal became subordinate to mannerism and the style tended to an ostentatious and morbid elegance. This was also true of the feast-day panels of the period, which were enriched by an abundance of decoration and anecdotal scenes.

The production of Christi Vita icons continued into the 19th century but the standard of painting sank sharply owing to their mass production, leaving intact the outer shell of a truly sacred art form.

Icons from the Fifteenth to Eighteenth Century

by Michel van Rijn

In the complex diversity of names and ecclesiastical law of the Eastern churches the only way to achieve comprehension is by studying their historical development. Besides all the tiny groups of Eastern Christians whose existence can be linked to some ancient, often forgotten, theological dispute there is also a large group who together form the Orthodox church, believers in established doctrines.
All the above groups have, of course, besides their differences of opinion, many points of consensus for, despite the internal divisions and the irreconcilable, often strongly politically coloured conflicts, all Orthodox churches participate in the traditions of the Christian East. And nowhere have these traditions of religious life and thought, the liturgical celebration of the ideals of the cloister, been abandoned. Orthodox theologians have always remained conscious of the unassailable truth of Orthodoxy, of the established doctrines. To quote Professor F. van der Meer: a suggestive title for the icon is 'orthodoxy made visible'.

THE ECCLESIASTICAL ASPECT

The eternal dispute over the use and function of the icon in the Christian church culminated in the Iconoclast movement and finally lead to the recognition of the connection between the saintly portrait and the cult and therefore of the worship of the saint through the medium of the icon. The censorship by the church of icons and their painters was inspired by religious temperance and resulted only rarely in small-minded supervision. It was rather that the church indicated the boundaries of the area within which the icon could develop, generally leaving the individual artist sufficient room to express his thoughts. Consequently, iconography remained open to the influences of the artistic traditions of the Orthodox peoples and the intellectual changes which took place over the centuries. The history of these peoples is also represented. You have only to consider the Greek icons made after the Turkish conquest of Constantinople in 1453. Outside the Ottoman empire, the Greek cities of Crete and countless other islands flourished under the protection of Venice. For in these cities were rich burghers and affluent religious communities and there the tradition of the iconographical centres of the Byzantine empire lived on. Exposure to Italian art, the contact with a public interested in art, open up new paths which lead the way to masterpieces. Gradually Italian elements were introduced into the traditional representations though memories of Byzantine paleography lingered on and consequently icons made in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in these towns do reveal classicist influences. In Greece itself, however, public and religious life was placed under the sway of the Turkish invader;

church and believers were obliged to resort to trained and talented monks from the cloisters in and around country villages to obtain their supply of icons. And their works reflect peasant life: simple compositions, lots of colour contrast and folklore elements that all conspire to give these icons a charm all their own. In the course of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries Russia, originally under the religious domination of Byzantium, freed itself from the teachings of Constantinople. Although the courts of the Russian rulers as well as the incumbents of the bishoprics – often Greeks themselves – remained oriented towards the imperial city on the Bosporus, in towns such as Novgorod and Pskov where the burghers were winning increasing influence a different type of icon was coming into being. Courtly noblesse and sophisticated refinement were not to the taste of the middle classes and the lower nobility. What they wanted were dramatic compositions, forceful, expressive gestures, primitive faces, brighter, rich colours, simple ornaments on the facades of buildings and on the ground beneath the figures' feet. This style of painting continued to influence the whole of Russia, as far north as Karelia, even after the fall of Novgorod in the sixteenth century. Once the principalities of Central Russia had recovered from the shock of the Tartar invasion, Moscow took a leading position and worked consciously towards the realization of a centrally governed Russian state; the fall of the Byzantine empire gave Moscow an even more honourable place as the centre of the Orthodox church in the eyes of the Slavic peoples. And the pomp and circumstance of the Constantinople the world had once known remained the shining example in the eyes of the grand-dukes and later the Czars. They attracted artists from every corner of the empire to their courts, so that the varying traditions of the most divergent regions were united into a national Russian style in which the styles of the earlier schools were all mingled together.

THE WORLDLY ASPECT

The development in Russian icons from the Middle Ages until the present century is closely related to the political history. Russia in the sixteenth century was characterized by a trend to centralization. Under Ivan I (1547-84) the lands and properties of a significant part of the nobility were confiscated. And the same nobility were the patrons of art. Whole cities, such as Novgorod, were in uproar. And wherever this reign of terror was felt, artistic activity virtually ceased to exist. Another factor which contributed to the centralization of icon painting was the disastrous fire in Moscow in 1547. The whole of the wooden city, with the exception of the Kremlin which was built of stone, went up in flames. To accelerate the restoration of the city as centre of religion and art, the Czar summoned the country's leading icon painters to Moscow, while the armouries of the Kremlin were turned into studios. These artists, representatives of the most diverse schools of icon painting from all over the Russian empire, had an enormously stimulating effect on each other in the tiny community. This contributed to the establishment in the sixteenth century of a heterogeneous Russian style, since known as the Central Russian or Moscow school, while in general provincial studios did their best to imitate the new style from the capital city. However, the icons which were made during this period by the monks of innumerable cloisters large and small outside Moscow are much coarser in terms of technique and style. Though they lack the refinement of the best icons from Moscow, they do show definite artistic quality. The famous cloister saints, the abbot-founders of large cloister communities, the patrons of the cloisters with a model of their cloister held in the hand or represented in the background were popular themes of the period and now constitute a rich source of historical information on iconography.

In 1667 there came a break in Russian icon painting. At the time the Patriarch Nikon was introducing his reforms which resulted in the secession of the Orthodox believers or 'Rasolniki' from the state church. These dissidents, who rejected all icons painted after the reforms, founded their own artists' colonies at the villages of Palech, Matera and Nikolskoi where until 1917 icons in the style of the Stroganoff and Moscow schools were produced. These artists provided huge groups of Orthodox believers with religious representations painted according to the strictest iconographic rules. The early icons from Palech, in particular, are of very high quality.

But why are icons so famous? What makes them so unique? A difficult question to answer without first enquiring into the reasons which caused the artists to found their own school. For in order to study the craftmanship and skills of the various schools, the icon painter must first re-appraise the religious dogmas which lie behind them.

An Introduction to Icon painting in Russia

by John Stuart, Expert of Sotheby Parke Bernet & Co

THE CONVERSION OF RUSSIA TO CHRISTIANITY AND RUSSIAN PARTICIPATION IN BYZANTINE CULTURE

The Grand Prince Vladimir of Kiev (died 1015), 'Equal of the Apostles', feeling that the native spiritual traditions were restricted in dimension when compared with the religious world view expressed by the faiths of his immediate neighbours, sent ambassadors to examine Judaism, Islam and Christianity. When his envoys reached Constantinople, at that time the political axis of a mighty empire and culture, it was the Emperor himself who conducted them into the church of The Divine Wisdom, 'placed them in a wide space and explained to them the worship of his God, calling their attention to the beauty of the edifice and the chanting . . .'

Returning to Kiev, Vladimir's ambassadors reported that they 'knew not whether they were in heaven or on earth, for on earth there is no such splendour nor such beauty, and we are at a loss how to describe it. We only know that God dwells there among men, and their service is fairer than the services of other nations. For we cannot forget that beauty!' A year later, in 988, Vladimir was baptised at Kherson and returned home to Kiev with a Byzantine princess for wife, and with priests, relics, sacred vessels and images. The idols of the old gods were destroyed, and a mass baptism of the citizens of Kiev took place in the River Dnieper.

This momentous event was decisive for the subsequent development of Russian culture and history. It gave Rus access to the accumulated experience of a great tradition which had matured over many centuries. In this way Rus not only came into contact with Constantinople – the political and intellectual centre of the Byzantine world –, but, by adopting Christianity in its Eastern, or Orthodox, form she was furthermore enabled to participate in the rich spiritual and cultural heritage of such Eastern Christian centres as Egypt, Palestine, Syria, Cappadocia, Armenia, Trebizond and lastly Georgia. It was in these centres – which include the birthplace of Christianity – that so much of the essential basis of the Christian world view, its metaphysical, contemplative and artistic experience, crystallized and received intellectual and artistic formulation.

THE PURPOSE OF THE ICON WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF CHRISTIAN CULTURE

If the Russian envoys to Constantinople reacted with sensitivity to the beauty of Byzantine worship, they must also have in some measure sensed the inner symbolic purpose of the sacred liturgic drama. For the liturgy elucidates man's place in the cosmos according to a divine scheme. The psychological ground is prepared, enabling the worshipper to penetrate the heart of the Christian revelation – the mystery of the Incarnation. The Incarnation or 'flesh taking' of God signifies an entry of the spirit into material and created existence which, far from being merely an historical event, was seen as a cosmic possibility reiterated through the mystery of the Eucharist when God becomes the very bread for man to eat. Further, it called for no less than the corollary: that man should recollect the latent possibilities of his being, obscured by the Fall, achieve union with God, and through grace participate in the divine nature. Or, as the Fathers put it: 'God became man, in order that Man might become God'. Seeking, like all religious traditions, to activate man's theomorphic nature, the Christian perspective could not be expressed in terms of a rational dogmatic or philosophical system; it presented paradoxes which,

crystallized through parable and myth, could be expressed symbolically through poetry, music, sacred art and architecture. It is in this light that one should apprise the exceptional importance of the icon within the context of the East Christian tradition. Traditional man (as opposed to post-Renaissance rational man) sees the created world as a reflection or image of a higher reality. And this interdependence between the higher and lower planes is the foundation of all symbolism and the basis for the symbolic nature of sacrament and image. The word icon means 'image', in the sense of a visible and material reflection of things unseen or spiritual. The icon is therefore the symbol or manifestation in formal or pictorial terms of unseen and spiritual realities. It reveals something of the 'divine world-order', and conveys an awareness of persons and events hidden from ordinary perception.

But the icon does not merely reflect the divine in an indirect or metaphorical manner; it actually partakes of the reality of which it is the image. It is charged with something of the life of what it images, becoming a centre of power, an embodiment of the spiritual energy of its divine or deified archetype. In this way the icon parallels the central mystery of the Christian Tradition, the Incarnation; and like the transfigured bread and wine of the Eucharist, it, too, testifies to the interpenetration of the supra-natural and the natural, the spiritual and the material, the divine and the human. Consequently it has a sacramental function.

THE LINEAR OR COMNENE STYLE OF PAINTING 10 – 12TH CENTURY

The conversion of Rus coincided with the dawn of a golden age of Eastern Christian art (10 – 12th century) which followed the triumph of Orthodoxy over iconoclasm. The iconclasts, or destroyers of images had, in effect, denied that matter could be vehicle of the spirit, a premise which threatened to undermine the very notion of the Flesh-taking of God and thereby the whole Christian scheme. The intellectual challenge presented by iconoclasm had been overcome by Orthodox theologians who found themselves called upon to elucidate the nature and purpose of the sacred image within a Christian perspective. And the motive force emanating primarily from Eastern centres continued to transmute the established Hellenistic artistic conventions.

While the gravity, refinement and noble features of classical beauty are retained, the naturalistic illusionism of the antique world is rejected. Artists now preferred to concentrate less on the external physical reality in their search for an adequate expression for the essential inner life force and organic harmony of the universe. A linear, rhythmically organised framework is the decisive element in this style of painting which was in general use throughout Eastern Christendom. A tendency towards linear abstraction had existed since the earliest period of the Christian era. It is already discernible in the wall paintings of the Roman catacombs, the mosaics of Ravenna and the frescoes of Cappadocia. But it reached its fullest development during the 11th and 12th centuries, and many of the finest surviving examples are to be found on Russian territory. Outstanding among these is the panel icon of the Vladimir Mother of God. Without doubt a Constantinopolitan work of the late 11th century, it is known to have been brought to Kiev in 1136. Among mosaic work of the period, that of the now demolished Kievan church of Archangel Michael 'Zlatoversky' is outstanding. The wall paintings of Staraya Ladoga near Novgorod (1167) and of the Dormition Cathedral in Vladimir are a superlative example of a linear technique, as are the bronze gates of Suzdal – unique 12th century iconographic schemes – inlaid with gold etching. The technique of the linear style, disciplined and highly complex, involved a system far removed from that based on the predominantly contour outline, subsequently filled in with flat planes of colour, generally found in the more concrete contemporary painting of Western Europe. The artist of the linear style transfers the emphasis from the contour to structural highlighting. He creates a mesh of calligraphic, rhythmic cadences and straight lines executed with precision in lighter tones, visually more emphatic than the darker outline-drawing to which they provide a counterpoint. Furthermore, each successive layer of drawing executed in various colours is designed to integrate with the previous layer. If it were possible to isolate each successive layer of a specific colour, it would be seen that the precise distribution of the colour planes and the geometric structures of the linear drawing correspond to a mathematically apportioned order – a rhythm of crystallized light.

Subordinating in this way every element of his composition to an all-embracing geometry of colour, the artist achieves a sense of structured unity while the precision and assurance of the drawing increases as he reaches the final definitive strokes. Following Russia's conversion, it

proved necessary to import icons from various centres and attract craftsmen and painters from abroad. The influx of foreign artists must have been prodigious and the Russians appear to have absorbed more than a veneer of the imported civilisation.

For by the 11th century the city of Kiev is described by a German monk as 'the ornament of the East, a rival of Constantinople'. One of the factors which explains how, after a mere two hundred years, Russia produced masterpieces of painting which surpass those of most Western countries, all of which had adopted Christian culture at an earlier date, are the close ties which then existed between Russia, the Bulgarians – a sister Slavonic race, already integrated into East Christian culture – and Byzantium. Among the most significant of these was the link between the Kievo-Pechersky monastery, Mount Athos and Thessaloniki.

Through the medium of Greek books already translated into Bulgar, the Russians gained access to much literature, an historical world view and the wisdom of Byzantium.

During the 11 and 12th centuries, there took place a transference of cultural life and political power from Kiev to Suzdalia, termed by the chronicle 'the land beyond the forest', owing to the dense belt of woodland which separates it from the ancient Kievan capital.

Prince Andrei Bogoliubsky, like so many of the heirs of Vladimir Monomach, found himself embroiled in an internecine struggle to secure possession of the seat of Kiev. Following the capture and sacking of the city in 1169, Andrei decided to abandon it and establish the political centre of his principality in Central Russia. To instrument this, Andrei removed from the Kievan Treasury of the Convent of Vyschgorod the Icon of the Vladimir Mother of God already referred to. One of the most revered icons and greatest surviving masterpieces of the Comnene linear style, an image linked constantly with Russian destiny and a major inspiration for painters. The removal of the Icon from the Treasury and its enshrinement at Vladimir indicated the transference of power from Kiev to Suzdalia. According to the chronicle, Andrei had sought to bring the icon to Rostov, the intended centre of the principality. But when it reached Vladimir, the horses refused to move any further; in this way the Mother of God was seen to sanction the setting for the new political and cultural centre.

A fundamental influence determining the civilisation of Vladimir Suzdal was the Central Russian landscape, with its open horizons, broad rivers and far flung spaces, snow-clad in winter, and of a gentle green, punctuated by flowers, in summer. Scarcely less important was the vigorous and intelligent art patronage of Suzdalian princes, Andrei Bogoliubsky and his successors, all of whom sought contact with art centres.

In the words of the chronicle: 'craftsmen came from many lands sent by God'. Andrei's stepbrother was married to an imperial Comnene princess. His brother was educated in Constantinople while his son, George, married the illustrious Georgian Queen Tamara. It is natural that the Suzdalian dynasty seeking an artform to reflect its sense of exalted destiny should have looked first to Kiev 'The Mother of Russian cities'.

Andrei's grandfather, Vladimir Monomach, had taken the measurements for his new church built at Rostov from the historic Pechersky Lavra at Kiev; but they also looked to Constantinople, the 'Czargrad' (imperial city) of the Slavs, a name which attests to its embodiment of the idea of theocratic imperial power. And this metropolitan source contributed much towards the aristocratic refinement, grandeur and dignity of the art of Suzdal – which, with its calm detachment, reflects the serenity of the surrounding landscape.

Carefully sited in the context of the landscape, the white limestone churches of the Vladimir Suzdal territory display coherence and laconic clarity. The sparingly applied, delicate decoration stresses the harmonious consonance of the proportions, contributing to the impression of slender vertical movement in the structure. It is perhaps significant that, whereas the Novgorod chronicler merely records the name of the founder of the church and the date of its construction, the Suzdalian chronicler is at pains to eulogise the beauty of the architecture.

Among the most poetic and refined creations of Russian architecture is a church built by Andrei Bogoliubsky dedicated to the Feast of the Protection of the Mother of God (Pokrov) – a festival which he himself had instigated. The church commemorates Andrei's victory over the Bulgars in 1164, a campaign in which his son Iziaslav perished. Conveying an impression of lightness and purity, it stands on the banks of the River Nerl close to its confluence with the Klazma and is a landmark for all boats entering the territory of Vladimir Suzdal from the east.

Many Suzdalian churches are distinguished by low relief sculptured limestone for which an

analogy has been sought in Romanesque art as well as in Georgia and Armenia. Among the themes to be found are representations of Alexander the Great transported to heaven in a fiery chariot – an apotheosis of royal power – bearing Leonine and female masks; the three youths in the fiery furnace – a reference to the Trinity – and King David, playing a lyre, his throne flanked by rhythmically disposed reliefs of animals and plants. The latter theme provides an image of cosmic harmony with the archetypal man – 'King' of his environment – at its centre, and a channel of grace for nature, over whose hidden forces he exerts power.

THE TARTARS

The century which saw the development of local centres of Eastern Christian art in Russia, also witnessed the holocaust of the Mongol invasion which overtook Suzdal in 1237 and devastated Kiev in 1240. Historians have tended to stress the negative aspect of the 'Tartar yoke', which they see as damaging because it severed Russia from Western Europe. Such a view, however, assumes, that the emerging civilisation of the Germano-Latin West occupies the centre of the stage of world history, and that the rightful path of Russia's destiny lies in consolidating her ties with the West in order to gain entry into 'European' civilisation.

It overlooks the fact that, despite the lack of communication between Russia and the West, contacts continue to exist with Eastern Christian centres, such as Mount Athos, where a Russian community had been established since the 11th century, and Constantinople. These were the vital links for the development of Russian culture.

Despite the terrible destruction of not only life but perhaps even of the bulk of the artistic heritage of the pre-Mongol era, a semblance of normality slowly returned to the stricken countryside. Furthermore, the Tartars held in respect every genuine religious revelation. It was not they who sought to destroy the roots of Eastern Christian culture in Rus, but the champions of Latin Christendom such as the crusading Teutonic knights who turned their might against Novgorod and Pskov in an attempt to annihilate them. The indigenous culture proved impervious to the threat of Tartar incursion which brought a change in the intellectual world view; for the presence of the Tartars was considered to be a divine punishment for man's sins stimulating the idea of moral purity and spiritual attainment – ideals assimilated through the spread of monasticism.

THE PAINTINGS OF THE PALEOLOGUE ERA AND HESYCHASM

The 14th century was a period of intense cultural activity throughout the entire Eastern Christian world. New currents of philosophy, literature, and painting were disseminated throughout Georgia, Armenia and the Balkans, reaching Rus later in the century. At the same time thousands of Greek and southern Slav refugees were arriving in Russia. Simultaneously a new style of painting emerged, which replaced the linear style of the preceeding era. Distinguished by art historians by the name Paleologue – the name of the reigning Eastern Roman dynasty – this style may be seen at its noblest and most developed in the extant monuments of its three main centres; at Constantinople in the Church of the Chora (or Kharye Djami) (1320); at Mistra in the Church of the Perivleptos (1350); and on Mount Athos in the Monastery of St. Paul. Here, superseding the fundamentally graphic construction of the Comnene period, a more pictorial or plastic sense of modelling is subtly accentuated by extensive use of broad patches of light coloured highlighting. Now the artist manipulates his brush to apply highlights with greater speed and there are new developments in the use and harmonious combination of colour.

The painting of the 'Paleologue Renaissance' coincided, in time, with the political decline of the empire. The fierce controversy between the Hesychasts (Quietists) and an emerging humanism constituted the intellectual background of the period. Hesychasm, far from marking a new departure in East Christian thought, is an ancient method of contemplation which can be traced back to the 4th century. The controversy over Hesychasm can be explained at a political and social level as a manifestation of an ancient rivalry, enmity and misunderstanding between the Latin West and Greek East. The spark which enflamed the passions was provided by a Greek monk, Varlaam, a sceptic philosopher from southern Italy who had absorbed currents of the emerging Italian Renaissance in the form of humanism and rationalised theology. Visiting Athos, Varlaam was shocked to encounter monks who, by means of mystic contemplation, claimed to have experienced a transfiguration of their bodies and a vision of God in the form of divine light. Varlaam attacked the spirituality of the monks, claiming that if they had a vision of

light, it must have been a 'material' not an 'uncreated' or 'divine' light. For Man, created in the natural world of time and space, is unable to attain union with a God whose nature is 'uncreated' and therefore 'unknowable'. Varlaam's profanation of the mystery of the hidden life of the monks recalls the crisis provoked by Iconoclasm. Both movements repudiate the spirit-bearing potential of the body and the created world, seeking to make of Christianity a religion of disincarnation. And both, by removing the greater part of human experience from the domain of grace, point to a real absence of God from the world.

It was St. Gregory Palamas who emerged as the defender of Orthodox theology against the attacks of the rationalists and the humanists. Elucidating the mysterious nature of the Trinity, Palamas stressed the fundamental paradox of the total transcendence of God beyond all things, and his total presence at the heart of all things. He drew a distinction between God's ultimate nature or essence on the one hand – unknowable because it transcends all knowledge and experience – and on the other, God's manifold powers and energies. These energies – the uncreated outpourings of divine infinity – enter into and transfigure the created world like the rays of the sun, which even as they strike the earth and warm it, remain inseparable from their source. If man were only a psycho-physical entity of created body and soul, he would not be able to participate in these uncreated, deifying energies. But man's highest faculty, that of the intuitive, spiritual intellect (Greek 'nous') is of another order altogether, being the mirror-image of God in man: the spiritual intellect is therefore uncreated and deiform. This intellect, purified and illuminated, enables man to recollect the spiritual principle within himself obscured by the Fall. Participating in the deifying creative energies of the spirit, man is enabled to see God face to face. 'Having acquired the grace of God', writes Palamas, 'the intellect . . . does not contemplate only its own image, but the clarity formed in the image by the grace of God . . . to see God one must acquire a divine eye and let God see Himself in us. When the divine eye looks at itself', he continues, ' . . . it sees the light; if it looks at the object of its vision that again is light, and if it looks at the means it employs in seeing that too is light; it is in this that union consists; all that is one, so that he who sees, can distinguish neither the means, nor the end, nor the essence, but is only conscious of being light, and of seeing a light distinct from any created thing!'

The influence of Hesychasm on icon painting is incalculable, for there existed a need to find a painterly means to express the essence of this mystic teaching. The painter sought to define the nature of his figures in whom passion had been eliminated, and knowledge of the divine acquired. And above all, it was the light – symbolic token of the confluence between man and the Godhead – which assumed prime importance. The psycho-physical human nature, transfigured through the action of the deifying divine energies enabled the figures to appear as mirrors of wisdom, reflecting and embodying a calm and noble serenity.

The nature of the uncreated Divine Light is visibly mirrored in the frescoes of Theophan, who is certainly the most outstanding of Greek artists who introduced the techniques of Paleologue painting into Russia. That the profound philosophical content of Theophan's work did not go unnoticed in Russia is evidenced by the chronicler's explicit description of him as 'a painter of icons, a Greek philosopher'. Already a mature and respected artist who had travelled widely including Greece and Mount Athos and worked in Constantinople before he arrived in Russia, in 1378, where he spent thirty years and painted some thirty churches, notably in Novgorod, Moscow and Nijni.

Apart from a few panels tentatively attributed to him, the main basis for an assessment of his style must rest on the few fragments of wall painting in the Novgorod Church of the Transfiguration (1378). Here, Theophan used a restricted, almost monochromatic, colour range. The warm cinnamon brown of the flesh tones is vividly illuminated by sharp daubs of light rendered by quick impetuous brush strokes reminiscent of calligraphy. These final strokes which have a distinctly ornamental character, illuminate the structural 'bone work' of the composition, providing an inner dynamism, a sense of movement, like a pointing finger.

NOVGOROD

Despite the fact that Theophan lived and worked in Novgorod, the painting of the Novgorod School demonstrates how little the citizens were prepared to penetrate the essence of his art. For the Novgorodians were never interested in abstract ideas and Theophan's style was too aristocratic and intellectual to grow roots on Novgorod territory.

Novgorod, whose antiquity rivals that of Kiev, was nonetheless an important centre of icon painting, so much so that during the late 19th century when icons were first cleaned and categorised on the basis of 'school', a Novgorod icon was considered almost as a synonym for excellence. A prosperous mercantile community, Novgorod was moreover able to attract the services of immigrant painters. During the 13th and 14th centuries the city was a vital link in the great chain of European trading cities which made up the Hanseatic League and was therefore in contact with the Romanesque culture of the Germano-Latin West. Novgorod, protected by dense forest and swamp, successfully strove to secure its independence, political privilege and freedom of commerce through the payment of booty to the Tartars.

Essentially a shrewd and industrious businessman, the Novgorodian was the product of a noisy and feverish life style which included public fisticuffs. This modest, matter-of-fact element is discernible in the local architecture, simple homely cube-shaped structures with enormously thick walls supporting small cupolas. The effect is sturdy, functional and systematic. Novgorod icon painting is no less forthright, virile and functional. The local icons are concrete images of appropriate themes and festivals rendered with maximum clarity and a logical, deliberate 'architectural' sense of construction. Full or bust length portraits of saints – patrons of various professions – are frequently encountered, often circumscribed by scenes representing biographical incidents taken from their lives. The Doctor Saints Cosmas and Damian, Paraskevi, patron of markets, and Nicholas the Sailor-Saint and Helper of the Poor, George the Warrior, Vlasii and Spiridon for the protection of horses and cattle. In these icons we discern an earthy and even coarse image of man; we see a peasant intent in expression and brusque of movement. For Novgorod painters, the graphic element always predominates over a sense of modelling in planes of colour. The vigorous use of line and an emphasis on the powerful descriptive contours executed in a dark pigment recall Romanesque painting. Using a restricted palette the Novgorod painter liked to mix sharp and resonant primary colours. Among the warm tones, it was vermilion red (kinovar) which predominates and which is habitually juxtaposed with cooler colours such as blue and a striking emerald green. This arrangement of pure colour juxtaposed has the effect of stressing their essential character and causing them to scintillate like jewels.

CENTRAL RUSSIA

The demotic icon painting of Novgorod stands in marked contrast to the painting of Central Russia, 'the land beyond the forest'. At the heart of this territory lay the principality of Rostov-Suzdal of which the capital had been established by Andrei Bogoliubsky at Vladimir and was to be moved to Nijni. Regarded as the legitimate cultural and political heir of Kiev, the principality embodied the continuity of a tradition and the unity went beyond local factions – a heritage which was to be assumed by Moscow later. The chief cities to come within the orbit of Rostov-Suzdal are Vladimir, Nijni, Tver, Uglich, Byeloozero, Rostov, Yaroslav, Pereslavl-Zalesky and Moscow. In this area, after the initial destruction of the Tartar invasion, the renewed cultural activity followed the lines already established during the pre-Mongol era. In other words the local culture was, abstract and aristocratic, faithfully assimilating the ideals and underlying principles of East Christian art as exemplified by the prototypes of such centres as Constantinople and Mistra.

Suzdal painting is calm and reflective, no single element being permitted to obstruct the overall mood of serenity. The constructional role of the linear drawing is carefully balanced and is of the same importance as the surface modelling. The shadowed tones and the flesh colour are softly graded, curves and straight lines are balanced with angles, achieving a dynamic equilibrium between pure geometric form and poised tension. The movement of the figures is calm and restrained as, inexorably absorbed, they appear to move and gesticulate as though officiating in a rite of which the tempo is regulated by cosmic harmony. The disposition of the colour planes is arranged so as to exclude any notion of sharp contrast which might create too startling an effect.

The favourite colours of Suzdal are cooler than those of Novgorod. Pride of place is given to lapis lazuli, placed often in proximity to variegated tones of green. Much use is made of ochre which due to an admixture of white is generally of a more pallid hue than that of Novgorod. Other colours often found are burnt umber, lilac brown and cherry red. The abstraction of the Suzdalian painter is evidenced by his desire to depict the general rather than the particular. His paintings are not narrative illustrations of past historic events but poetic and symbolic equiva-

lents. He depicts not the physical reality of the surrounding world but the underlying cosmic principles which instil it with life.

It is usual to give special emphasis to the name of Andrei Rubliev (circa 1370-1430) in the story of Russian art and it is clear that Rubliev was an artist of genius. The tendency, however, to see his work as the climax of the icon painting tradition, is due less to a conviction that his painting surpasses that of other artists, than to the historical accident that his name has been recorded in the annals of icon painting – a generally anonymous art form.

Rubliev is first mentioned in the chronicles as working alongside Theophan the Greek when both were employed by the Moscow Grand Prince on the painting of the Iconostasis for his private church of The Annunciation in the Kremlin in 1405. One of the earliest examples of a many-tiered screen of panel icons, it reached a height and expressed a fully thought out cosmological scheme which was henceforth to become a characteristic feature of Russian churches. And although Rubliev never became in any special sense a follower of Theophan, his painterly experience must inevitably have broadened through this collaboration. In 1408, Rubliev worked with Daniel Chorny on frescoes and panel icons for the Dormition Cathedral in Vladimir which have survived only in part. Among the extant icons attributed to Rubliev during his maturer years are three icon panels known as the Zvenigorod Deesis and, most celebrated of all, the Holy Trinity (circa 1411-1422) commissioned by the Abbott of the Trinity Sergei Monastery north-west of Moscow in memory of the founder of the community, Sergei of Radonejsk. Rubliev was himself a monk of the Trinity monastery and may have known Sergei. His paintings are a worthy memorial to one of the purest lights of Russian spirituality.

Rubliev's icon represents the mystery of the Trinity in the guise of the three mysterious heavenly visitors encountered by Abraham at Mamre (Genesis XVIII, 1-15). The figures are related to one another with the utmost subtlety. United by the interplay of their glances, the Angels appear engrossed in silent mystical conversation. But it is, above all, through the composition that Rubliev reveals the essence of the Triune Godhead. For the angel at which Angels incline their heads and the positioning of their feet allow the eye to encompass the whole composition within a perfect circle. In this way, the Angels remain distinct from one another, yet merged together, forming an indissoluble unity.

Rubliev's style conforms to the general characteristics of the artistic tradition of Suzdal and Central Russia. During the 14th century Suzdalia was no longer the dominant force in the Central Russian area although it still remained an important religious centre famed for the learning of its monasteries, among the most celebrated of which was that of the Pokmov (founded 1364), a renowned art centre. But chronologically Rubliev's work coincides with the ascendancy of Moscow and its aspirations to become a leading all-Russian political and cultural centre, the legitimate successor of the Vladimir Suzdal principality, which it had annexed in 1392. Rubliev is therefore sometimes described as an artist of the Moscow school. The Grand Prince of Muscovy was indeed the greatest patron of the region and artists from Russian, Greek and southern Slav lands gravitated to his capital. But it was above all the old heritage of Vladimir Suzdal which exerted a formative influence over the emerging 'Muscovite school'. Theophan had of course worked in Nijni (the Suzdalian seat of government in the period before its annexation); another of Rubliev's collaborators, Prokhor, came from Gorodetz, a region right at the centre of Vladimir Suzdal territory, and Rubliev himself had worked both at Zvenigorod and Vladimir. He died at the Spaso-Andronikov Monastery on the outskirts of Moscow.

The icon painting of the late 15th and early 16th centuries was dominated by the figure of Dionysii (1450-1508) in whose painting the heritage of Suzdalia can still be readily discerned. Although evidently a prolific painter, only a handful of icons can reliably be attributed to his hand. The main basis for the assessment of Dionysii's style is provided by a cycle of frescoes painted by a team of helpers, including his two sons, at the Ferapont Monastery, 350 miles north of Moscow. These wall paintings bear comparison with the frescoes of the Chora at Constantinople and of Mistra. Stress is laid on the vertical lines that go into the making of his tall narrow figures grouped together and the upward sweep of his background architecture. Small heads are set on narrow, severely sloping shoulders. Whereas in Rubliev's painting the figure is ten times as high as the radius of its halo, with Dionysii it is twelve times as high. The influence of Suzdal is readily discerned in the aristocratic and depersonalised facial features, the folds of the garments rendered in thin fluent lines and the rhetorical gestures and the treatment of ornament.

The delicacy of Dionysii's painting is accentuated by the extraordinary refinement of his thinly applied colour lilac, violet, pale blue, pale grey, pink, cherry red, to ochre, the colour of corn. Dionysii and his pupils profoundly influenced the development of Russian icon painting during the early 16th century with its lightness, elegance and pure, delicate and transparent colours.

PSKOV

The icon painting of Pskov – a city in the north-west of Russia on the border of Lithuania-Poland – is less well known than that of its north-easterly neighbour, Novgorod. Yet it occupies a vitally important place in the history of Russian art. Far more than any other area, Pskov had the capacity to borrow the appropriate artistic elements if required from extraneous sources and then to reconstruct and re-work them to form a new synthesis. During its early history, Pskov was a dependancy of Novgorod, becoming autonomous in 1348.

Thereafter, official documents refer to Pskov as the 'younger brother of Lord Novgorod the Great'. As a province of Novgorod, inevitably the earliest Pskovian monuments rely upon Novgorod models, the latter being under the influence of Western Romanesque painting. Hence the earliest Pskovian icons (dating from the 13th century) are quite far removed from the Byzantine canons. During the same period, however, the development of a local style of architecture distinct from that of Novgorod attests to an emerging originality. The Pskov churches forego the logical coherence and simple organisation of a cube covered with a cupola favoured by Novgorod; instead, one may discern squat, cave-like structures where corbelled arches rather than pendantives support the drum of the dome. And during the 15th century, the four internal pillars had been dispensed with. Within the dim interior the icons were designed to stand out like focal points of light.

Pskov was always confronted by people of a different culture, an unfamiliar religion and a strange language. As the furthermost frontier of Russian land and indeed of Eastern Christianity in the north-west it was repeatedly engaged in cruel wars of survival. And consequently it was of prime importance for Pskov to establish its own cultural identity.

During the 14th century the painting of Pskov was fundamentally transformed under the influence of the mystic currents of Hesychast thought, contact with which was decisive for Pskov. Local icon painting ceased to rely on the system of contour outline drawing and turned instead to the mainstream of Eastern art. The underlying principles were of course only gradually elaborated but became established during the second half of the century, especially during the thirty-year period when Theophan was active in Russia. These principles were to determine the basic quality of Pskov painting until the end of the school's existence during the 16th century.

The colouring of Pskov icons is unmistakable: much use is made of yellow derived from sulphur which habitually replaces gold both for the assist (gold linear hatching) and also in the background where it is applied in unevenly textured strokes. Two other tones tend to predominate: a raspberry red and a deep spinach green which is sometimes modified by the admixture of sulphuric yellow. The rendering of the faces is equally distinctive – eyes with an intensely sharp expression are set beneath closely knit, upward slanting eyebrows. The dark priming colour of the shadow tones and the superimposed flesh tints are juxtaposed to form a sharp contrast, unlike the softly graded and muted flesh tints of Suzdal icons. And the application of the assist is noticeably more generous.

After the 14th century this filigree mesh of gold lines cast its fine web through virtually all the figures and even the landscape. Pskov icons reveal a complex system of inner dynamics, a precise and balanced symmetry and geometric construction, of which the vital constructive elements are the white highlighting, together with precise organisation and rhythmic distribution of the colour planes.

MOSCOW

By the late 15th century the Grand Principality of Moscow had clearly emerged as the unifier of Russian lands, the legitimate cultural heir of the Emperors of Constantinople and the victor over the Tartars. As a consequence of its political and economic supremacy, the city of Moscow inevitably assumed increasing importance as an art centre, and artists and craftsmen gravitated thither or were summoned to work there in order that the religious and civic dignity of the 'Third Rome' might be reflected in her art. Thus, the reconstruction of the Kremlin undertaken by Ivan

III at the end of the 15th century was both a sign of increasing economic prosperity and a symbol of Moscow's new prestige. Initially the Grand Prince summoned Pskovian architects to reconstruct the Coronation Cathedral of the Dormition on a larger scale. But they proved inadequate for the task and when the vaults collapsed Muscovite envoys abroad secured the help of a team of Italians led by Aristotle Fiorovanti, architect and engineer of the city of Bologna. Although the entire process of reconstruction was undertaken by Italian architects, Ivan allowed them little scope to carry out their own ideas. Fiorovanti and his assistants were primarily required to instruct the Russians in the technicalities of building, teach them how to span a roof, and how to use hoists. As experts familiar with up-to-date siege resistance devices, they were entrusted with the designing of the Kremlin walls and towers (the upper part of these towers were added during the 17th century, which accounts for their somewhat whimsical and 'Russian' effect). But when it came to planning the Kremlin cathedrals, the Italians were required to adhere to the ancient Suzdalian principles of design. Fiorovanti was actually obliged to go to Vladimir in order to study its 12th century Cathedral. In the Dormition Cathedral, Fiorovanti fulfilled all the stipulations required of him. By reproducing the salient features of Vladimir Suzdal architecture, the architect provided a symbol of the continuity of the Russian tradition of architecture, as well as continuation of the power of the ruling princes of Moscow, handed down to them by their Vladimir Suzdal predecessors.

Although moulded primarily by the achievements of Suzdal and in particular developed from the work of Rubliev and Dionysii, both of whom had worked for the Muscovite Grand Prince, the Moscow school is basically a compilation. And throughout the 16th and 17th centuries the Kremlin lay at the heart of the nation's artistic as well as political life; here painters, metal workers, writers, architects worked together for Czar and Metropolitan. The great fire of 1547 devastated so much of the city that the task of restoring icons and painting new ones called for a mobilisation of virtually all available artists from Novgorod, Pskov and elsewhere, who came to Moscow to work in the Kremlin workshops as well as at the Simonov and Trinity-Sergei monasteries. In this way a uniform Muscovite school of painting composed of elements of various centres gradually replaced the local icon painting traditions of other towns in the areas of Central Russia, Novgorod and Pskov. Teams of artists were also despatched from Moscow to paint churches and monasteries in the provinces. And the great monastic centres which were also agents of Muscovite local government were the channels for the dissemination of this Muscovite style all over Russia.

By mid-century the style of painting and tonality of colours had undergone considerable modification, thereby distinguishing Muscovite art from that of Dionysii. The soft and fluent sensitivity of Dionysii's drawing is gradually replaced by a bolder and more severe draughtsmanship, and the light festive colours are now replaced by darker tones. This applies not only to the general colour scheme but also to the background, which the icon painter calls 'light' (svet), and which from the latter half of the 16th century was often olive green, fawn or tawny brown. During the 16th century the custom of embellishing the painting with silver settings in the form of strips of tooled silver nailed over the neutral area of the background became much more widespread. Since the gold background was henceforth concealed under the metal casing, a turgid ground was used as a base in its stead. The composition of icons painted during the 16th century became more burdened as additional figures, and subsidiary elements, were introduced. The calm depersonalised expression of the faces is sometimes replaced by a taut expression; there is an abundance of ornament, its role now purely decorative and it no longer functions within the construction of the composition. There is an increase of the narrative element at the expense of the timeless and metaphysical. In other words, the nature of the icon as a symbol is slowly obscured or partially contradicted by the introduction of mere allegory. This allegory is much in evidence in a new range of analytical pseudo-mystic, didactic themes which define categorically what the artist previously conveyed through symbolism of an algebraic character. At the local church council held in Moscow in 1553-54 a Secretary of State, Viskovati, formally protested against these innovations in canonical icon painting which he claimed to be due to Western influence. He drew attention to a quadripartite icon painted by Pskov painters for the Annunciation Cathedral where, among other curious representations, a figure of a soldier seated upon the spandrels of a cross, and of a crucified seraph could also be seen. Judgment, however, was given against Viskovati and the popularity of such didactic analytical themes increased.

The Viskovati affair and the attention given in general at councils to questions relating to icon painting is evidence of a growing confusion, an uncertainty about the meaning and function of sacred art in 16th century Muscovy. It now needed elucidation, precisely because it was no longer clearly understood. At the Stoglav Council (1551) it had already been stated that an icon painter must be of honourable character and must in all things follow not his own fancy but faithfully adhere to the old traditions handed down by the Greek painters and by Andrei Rubliev. So it was that the cultural tradition during the 16th century displayed signs of faltering which coincided with the consolidation of the strength of the Muscovite Czardom. At the root of the problem was the absence of a cross-fertilisation from other geographical areas participating in the same spiritual tradition and world-view, something essential for the vitality of any culture. All the main cultural centres of Eastern Christendom outside Russia had been overrun by Islam, so that Muscovy was deprived of external cultural stimulus at a time when the indepent local centres of icon painting within Russia had been superseded by a native 'all-Russian' school.

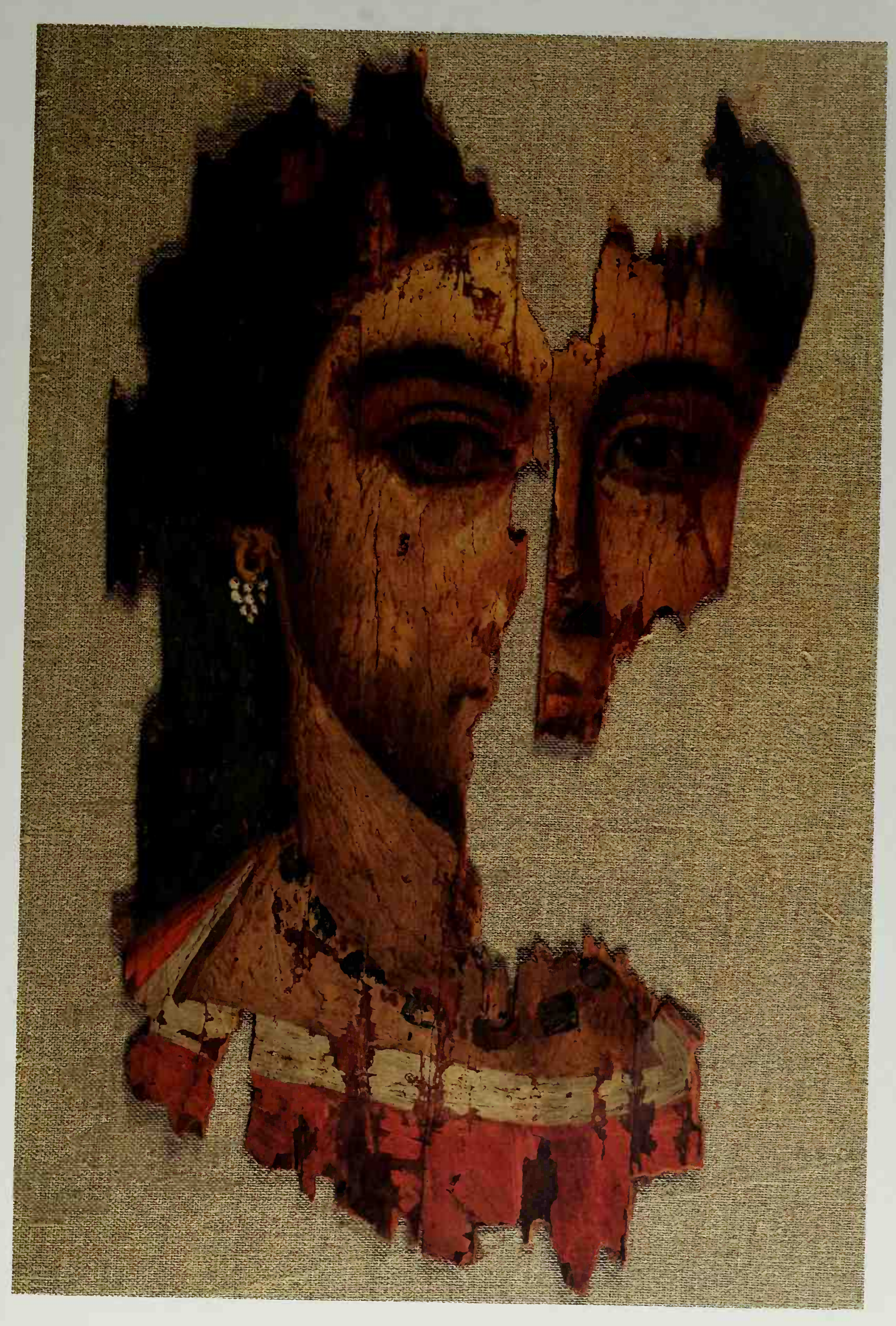
With the cultural activity of other Orthodox peoples virtually eradicated or reduced to the level of folk art, Muscovy found herself confronted by Islam on the one side and the West on the other. From Islam, a sister civilisation which had won over the greater part of the geographical area of Eastern Christianity, Russia absorbed various elements of ornament, chiefly through the media of silver, enamel and textiles. By the late 16th century these were to play their part in the icons known by the name of Stroganov.

By the late 16th century Russia was in the throes of a profound cultural and political crisis. The proliferation of form and the concentration on ornament betokened a popularisation of culture which would virtually reduce it to folk lore, a process which can be followed clearly in the development of ecclesiastical architecture where clarity and perception are replaced by fantasy.

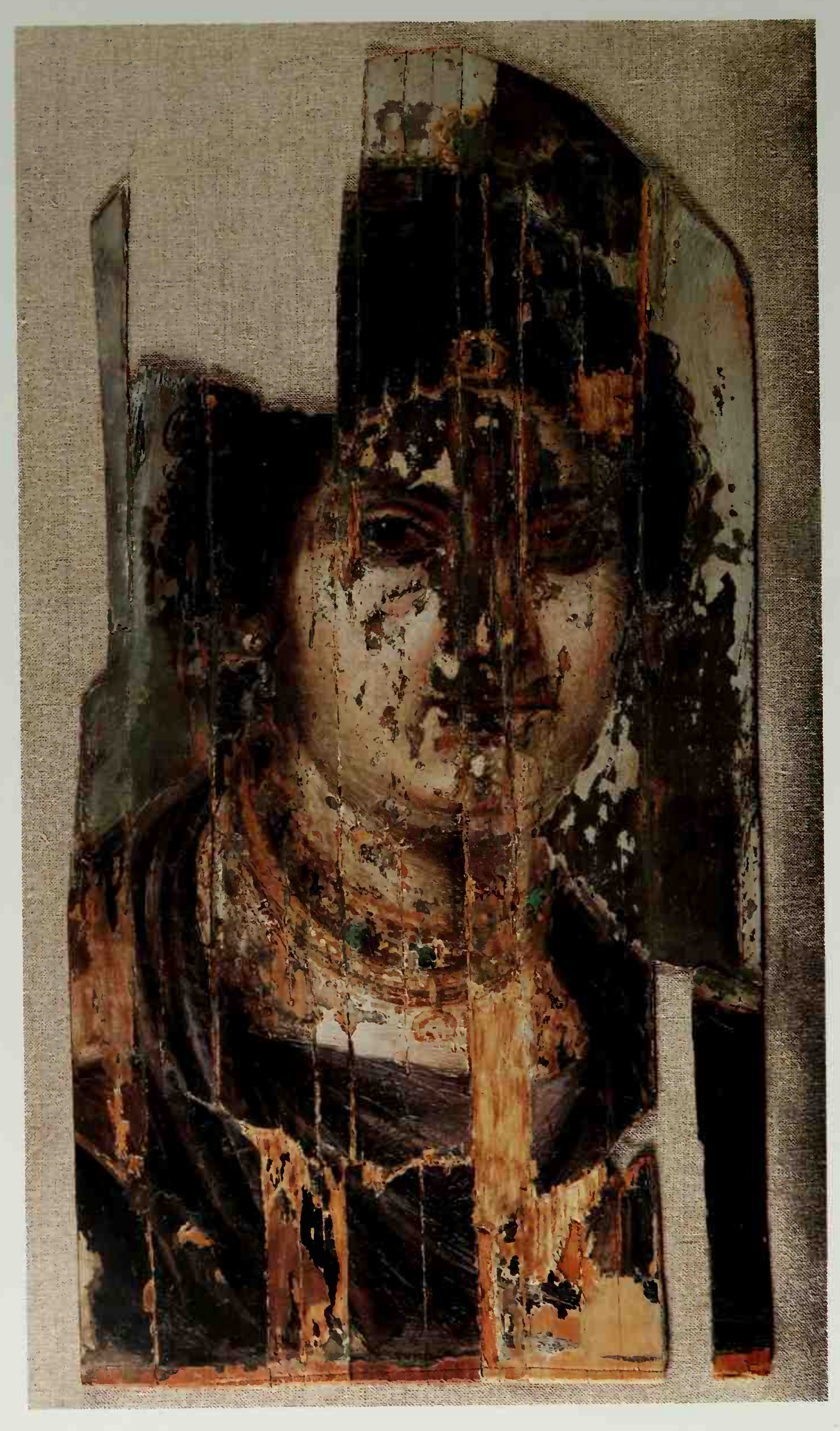
Deprived of strong political leadership through the demise of the old dynasty, Russia all but succumbed to western expansion, for during the Time of Troubles (1605-13) it seemed that the Poles and Swedes might succeed in retaining a permanent hold over the smitten country and Orthodox Russian civilisation would be extinguished forever. With the elimination of the invader and the accession to the throne of the Romanov dynasty, Russia was caught between reproducing and elaborating upon motifs of her own past, or turning for inspiration to the brilliant West. The latter course meant not only technical advancement but, ultimately, secularisation and the distortion of the wholeness and clarity of the traditional world-view. The former course meant stagnation. During this period of cultural confusion Patriarch Nikon (1652-66) sought to uphold traditional culture by forbidding the incorporation of elements of western naturalism into icon painting while he launched an extensive building programme to serve as a model for canonical art. But while his firm polemics against Western aesthetics were incapable of instilling new life and vigour into traditional art he, more than anyone else, was responsible for the church schism of 1654 which, by splitting Russian life asunder, marked a further stage in the breakdown of the old culture. In the same year Little Russia – the Ukraine – adhered to Russia, Kiev following suit in 1667. And the recovery of these ancient Russian lands, so long within the cultural orbit of Poland, was to provide a filter through which the attitudes and values of the West might reach Muscovy.

In the field of icon painting the tempering of tradition by Western naturalistic humanism is associated above all with the name of Simon Ushakov (1626-86). Appointed court painter when only twenty-two, Ushakov's interest ranged over a wide field. He tried his hand at fortifications, map-making, portrait painting and casting cannon. Subscribing to an ideal of earthly, as opposed to transcendental, beauty, Ushakov felt a particular fascination for the human face. His meticulously rendered portraits of Christ, with their pale gold colours, are both of historical and artistic interest. They represent the first stage in the evolution of Russian secular art. In the conflict between Western naturalism and Eastern tradition, Ushakov resorted to a compromise. Where composition was concerned, he adhered to the Byzantine precedents, but adopted naturalism in the painting of the faces. In the 17th century the civilisation of the Germano-Latin West emerged to assume global supremacy. From this date Western technological prowess gave rise to Western expansion eastwards, which continued unchecked until the 20th century; while the emerging secular and utilitarian culture of the West contributed to the growing erosion and spiritual collapse of all traditional and non-Western civilisations which have continued unabated ever since.

Fayoum Portraits, Stucco Heads and Encaustic Panels



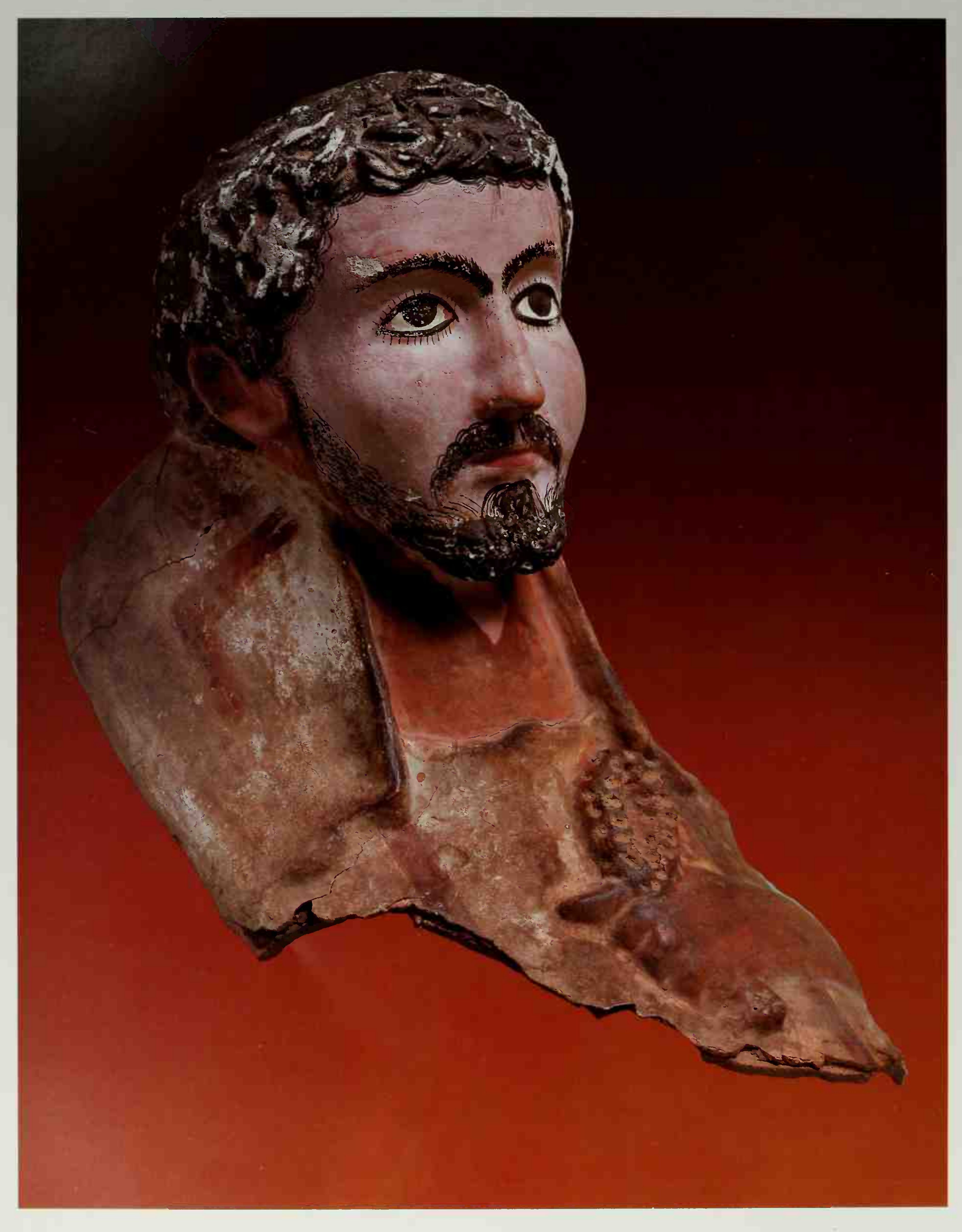
Fayoum Portrait, 27 x 16 cm, Egypt, 2nd century



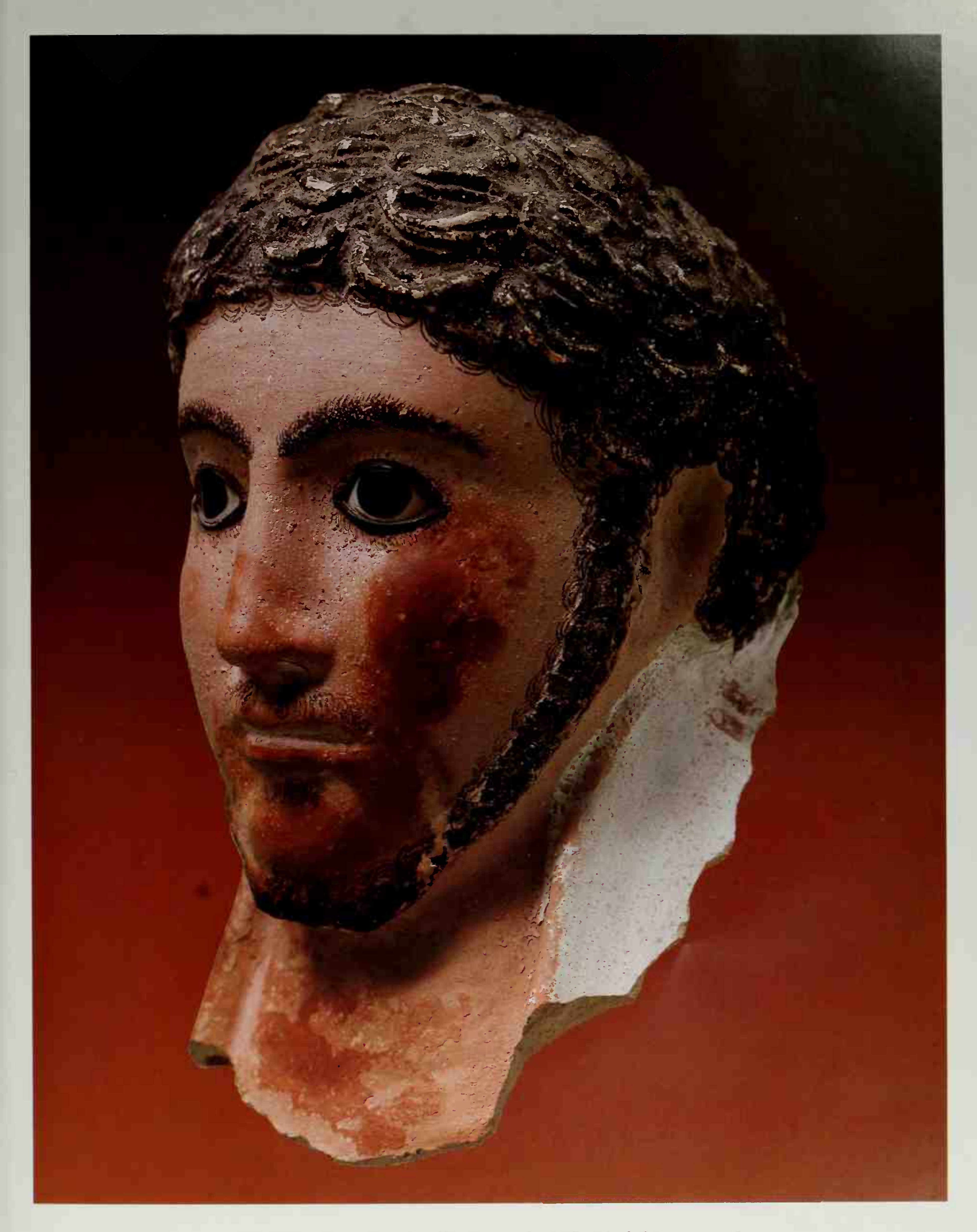
Fayoum Portrait, 40 x 20 cm, Egypt, 2nd century



Fayoum Portrait, 36 x 23 cm, Egypt, 2nd century



Stucco Head of a Man, height 32 cm, Graeco-Roman, 2nd century



Stucco Head of a Man, height 40 cm, Graeco-Roman, 2nd century



Head of a Saint, encaustic painting on wood, 20.6 x 28.2 cm, Coptic, 4th century



Encaustic painting on wood, 17 x 30 cm, Egypt, 6th or 7th century

Byzantine Works of Art



Cross, bronze, 48.5 x 31 cm, Byzantine, 11th century



Mosaic representing an Inscription, 52 x 137 cm, Syrian, 6th century



Mosaic representing a Church, 101 x 121 cm, Northern Syria, 6th century





A gold enamelled Pectoral Cross, 4.9 x 3.5 cm, Byzantine, early 12th century

The front of this gold enamelled pectoral cross shows five circular cloisonne enamel roundels centred by Christ, flanked on his left by St. John the Baptist, on the right by the Virgin Mary, above St. Michael and below St. Nicholas, the reverse similar, centred by a roundel of St. Theodor flanked by St. George on his left, St. Demetrius on his right, St. John the Evangelist above, St. Andronikius below, each with his name enamelled in Greek beside, with hinged dodecahedral suspension point. For a pectoral cross of similar form see the example in the National Museum, Copenhagen (K. Wessel, Byzantine Enamels, 1969, no. 59, p. 185) dated circa 1200. The green enamelled background of the roundels would suggest a date in the 9th century (see the book-cover in the Biblioteca Marciana, Venice, illustrated W. Kesel, op. cit., no. 13, dated 9th century). However, the severe treatment of drapery of the figures would suggest the 12th century as a more plausible date. For similar cloisonne enamels on gold of the same date, see the examples executed in Western imitation of the Byzantine cloisonne technique, comparable with busts of nimbed saints, exhibited at the Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore, Early Christian and Byzantine Art. April 25 - June 22, 1947, p. 109, pl. LXIX.



Torso of the Saviour, marble, 28.5 x 31 cm, Constantinople, 11th or 12th century



Page from an Illuminated Manuscript portraying an Evangelist, probably Luke or Mark, 32 x 22 cm, Armenia, 2nd half 13th century



Page from an Illuminated Manuscript portraying Christ's Ascension, 32 x 22 cm, Armenia, 2nd half 13th century





Twelve Byzantine Gold Coins

1. Emperor Heraclius
   Name of coin: Solidus
   Struck between 619-641
   Constantinople, Officina B
   Dumbarton Oaks, cat. 44b

2. Emperor Heraclius and Heraclius Constantine
   Reign: 613-630
   Name of coin: Solidus
   Struck between 619-620
   Constantinople
   Dumbarton Oaks, cat. 210

3. Emperor Justinianus II
   First reign: 685-695
   Name of coin: Semissis
   Struck between 692-695
   Constantinople
   Dumbarton Oaks, cat. 10

4. Emperor Constantine VII and Romanus II
   Name of coin: Solidus
   Struck between 945-959
   Constantinople
   Cat. Ratto no. 1905

5,6. Emperor Zeno, Reign: 474-491, Constantinople
   Name of coin: Solidus
   End of legend: Gamma
   Cat. Ratto no. 279

7. Emperor Marcianus
   Reign: 450-457
   Name of coin: Solidus
   End of legend: Gamma
   Cat. Ratto no. 213

8. Emperor Anastasius
   Reign: 491-518
   Name of coin: Solidus
   Constantinople, Officina A

9. Emperor Constantine IV
   Reign: 654-685
   Name of coin: Solidus, type IV, Struck between 681-685, Constantinople
   Dumbarton Oaks, cat. 4
   Cat. Ratto no. 1669

10. Emperor John II
   Reign: 1118-1143
   Name of coin: Hyperpyron
   Struck in Constantinople
   2nd coinage, Cat. Ratto no. 2097

11, 12 Emperor Alexis I
   Reign: 1081-1118
   Name of coin: Hyperpyron
   Struck between 1081-1118
   (11) Constantinople
   Cat. Ratto no. 2059
   (12) Thessalonica 1093-1118
   Cat. Ratto no. 2054/2055

1. Gold Medallion,
32 mm diameter, Byzantine, circa 6th century

The surface of this circular gold medallion bears the image of the Madonna in filigree, with a crown and star-spangled background. The face of the Madonna is carved in ivory. And there is a scroll attachment at the top of the medallion through which is threaded a gold chain with a seed pearl on either side of the attachment.

2. Encolpion, golden and steatite relic, 5 x 3.3 cm, Constantinople, 12th century

Inscribed on the front of the closed encolpion is the Greek text Ο βασιλευς τῆς δόξης (King of Glory). At the back: ὁ ἅγιος βασιλειος (Saint Basil); referred to is Basil the Great, archbishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia, who died on January 1, 379.



1



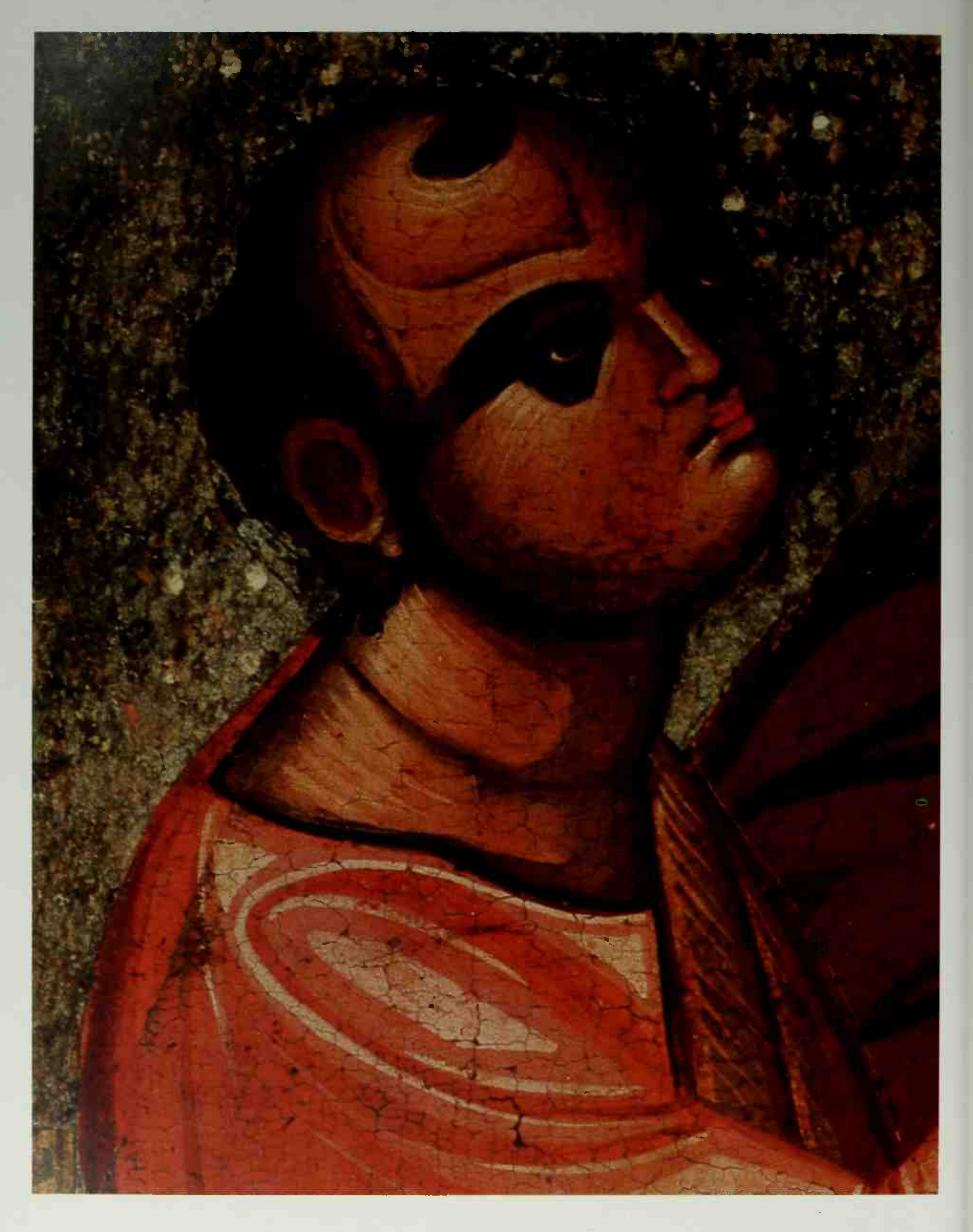


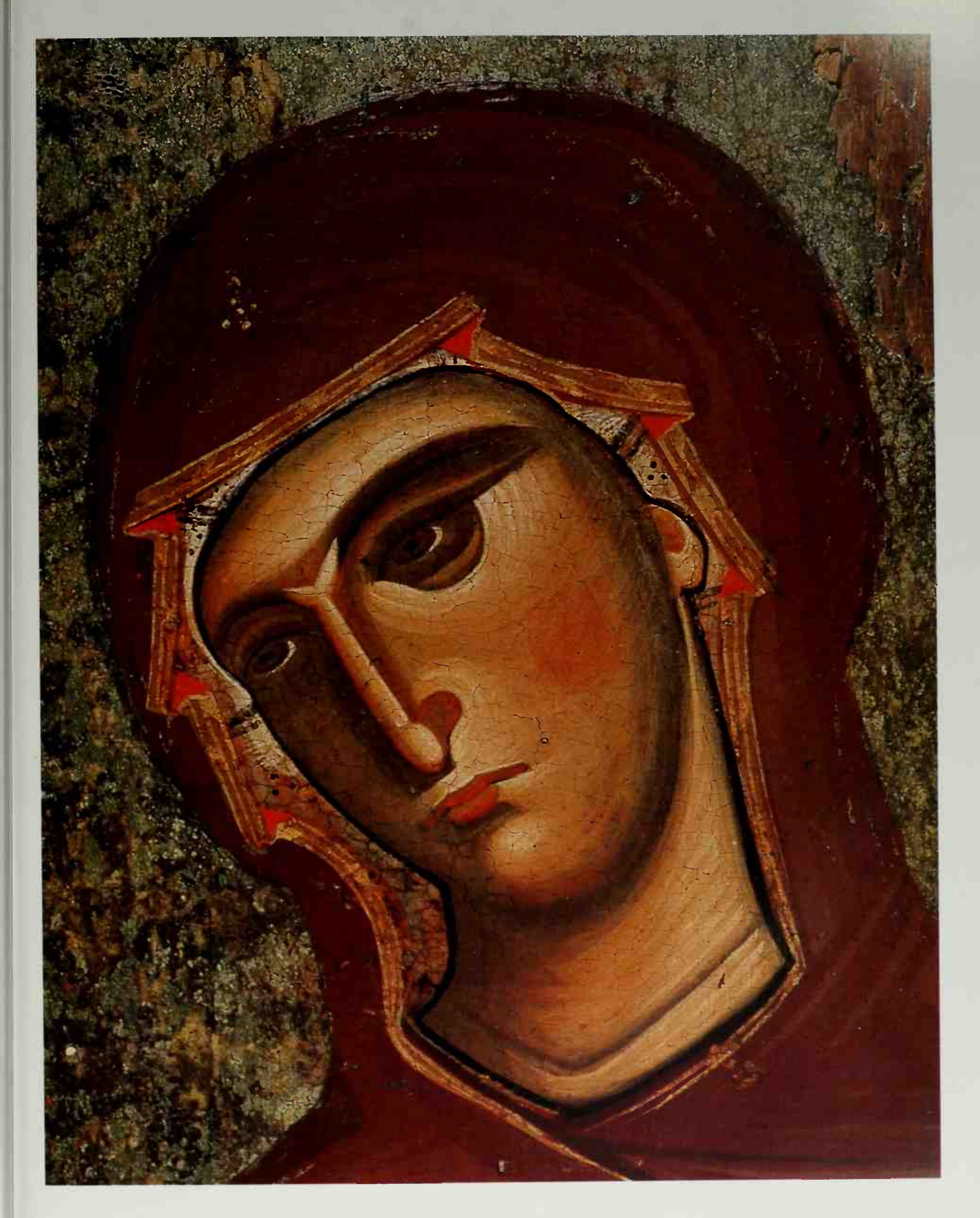
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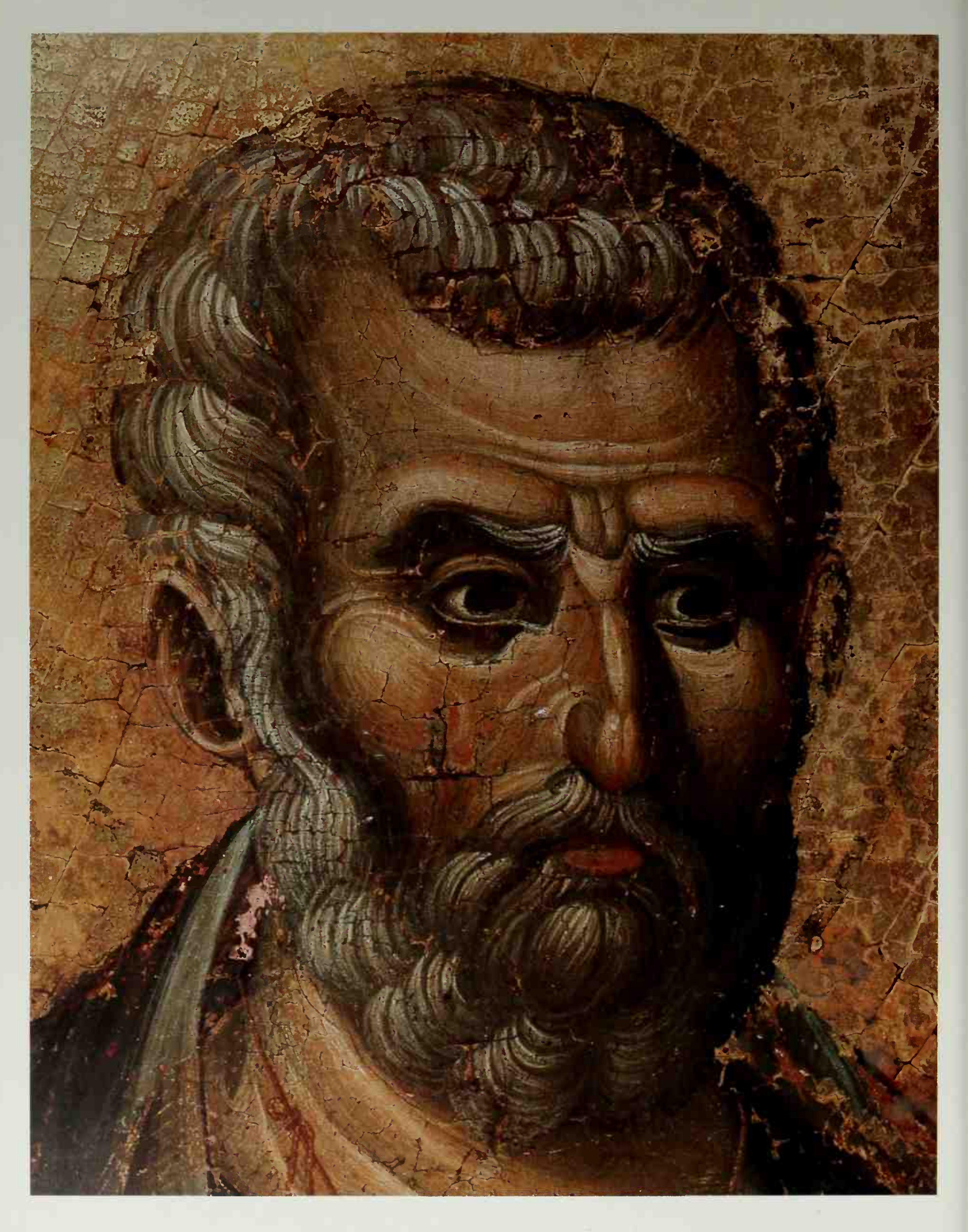
Byzantine Icons



Virgin and Child, canvas on wood, 93 x 56 cm, Dalmatian, 13th century
(See details on pages 60 and 61)

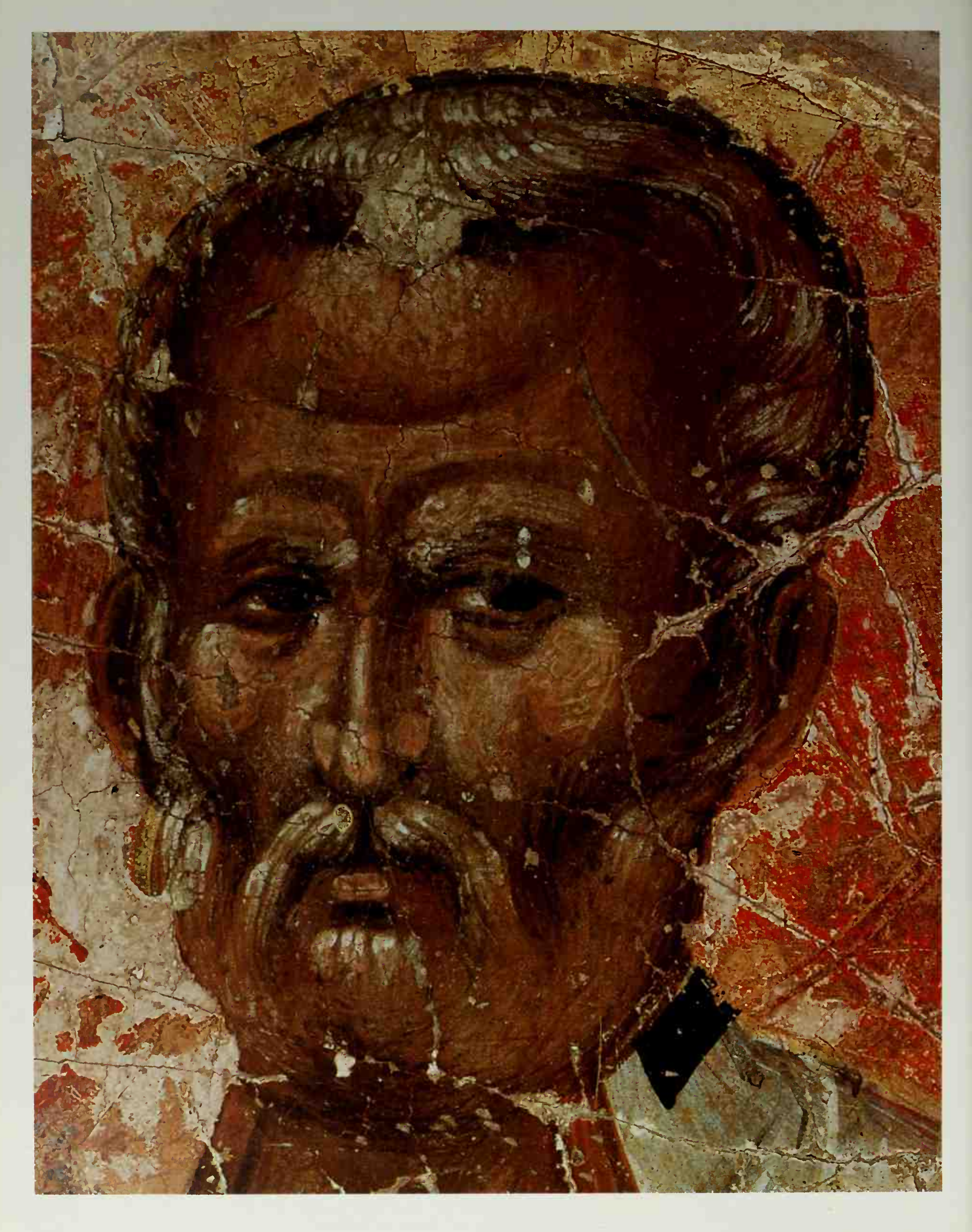








Saint Peter, panel, 93 x 69 cm, Macedonian, 1300





Saint Nicholas, panel, 30.5 x 20 cm, Ochrid, 13th century





Saint Theodore the Tyran, panel, 45 x 34 cm, without the additional frame 40 x 23 cm, Macedonian, early 15th century



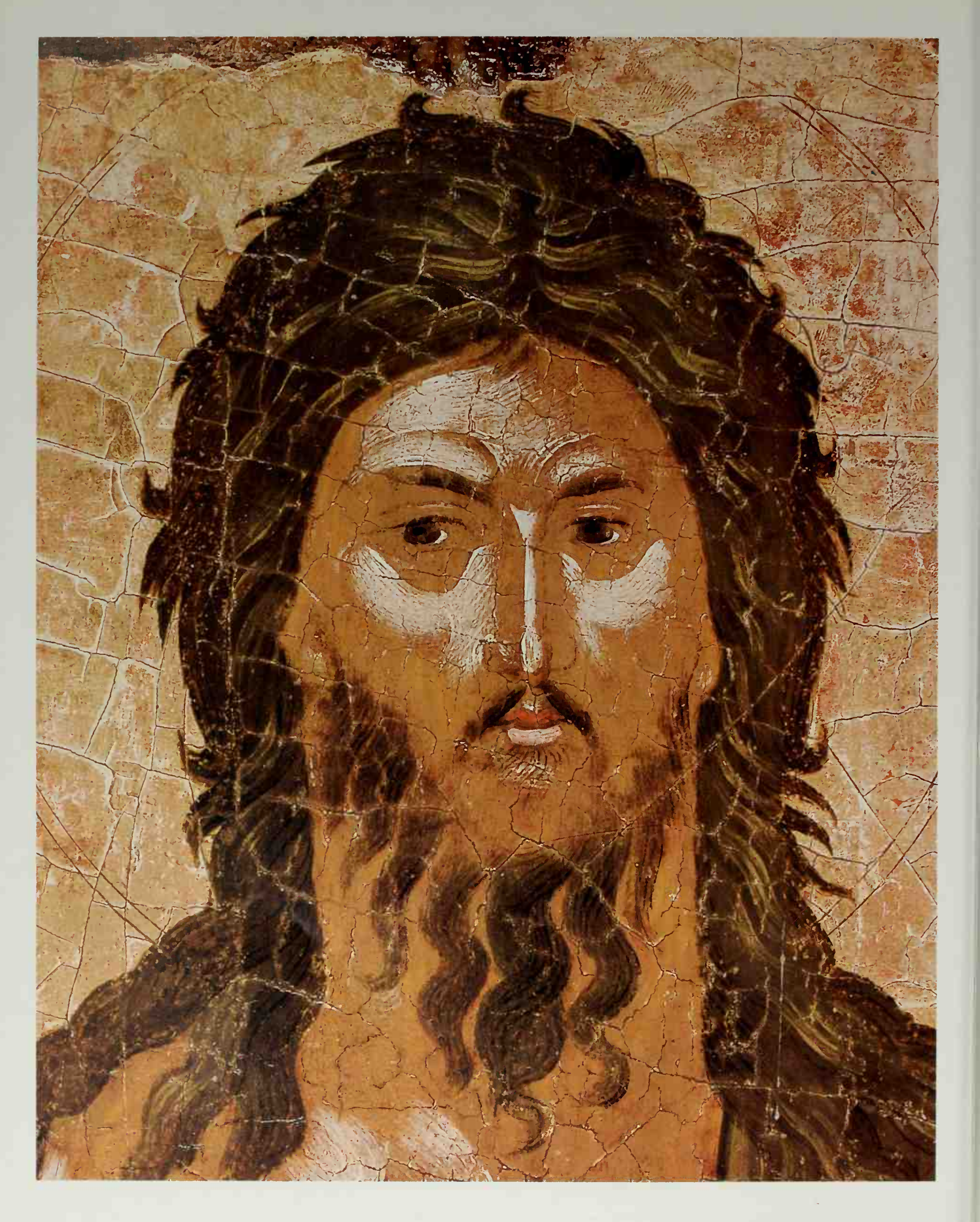


Saint Theodore the Stratelates, panel, 44.5 x 34 cm, without the additional frame 38 x 28 cm, Macedonian, early 15th century





Saint Procopius, panel, 110 x 74.5 cm, Macedonian, 14th century





Saint John the Baptist, panel, 41 x 31 cm, Byzantine, School of Constantinople, third quarter of the 14th century





Saint John the Theologian, panel, 103 x 67 cm, Constantinople, early 15th century



Twelve Feasts, panel, 28 x 38 cm, Ochrid, 15th century



The Annunciation, panel, 34 x 22 cm, Ochrid, second half of the 15th century



Simeon the Bearer of God, panel, 33.5 x 28.5 cm, Russian, late 15th century



The Archangel Michael, panel, 21 x 17 cm, Asia Minor, 15th century



The Ascent of Elijah, Byzantine fresco, 170 x 140 cm, Libanon or Syria, 15th century

Greek Icons
and Related Works of Art



Crucifix, woodcarving, 40.5 x 9 cm, Mount Athos, 18th century





Stole, 111 x 12 cm (each), Serbian, mid 16th century

This stole, with embroidery in gold and silver threads, can be compared with another example dating from 1553, now in the museum of the Orthodox Church in Belgrade. It bears the following inscription: 'made by Heléne Tsrnogevits and Kyr Demètre, son of Kyr Gkvozntenov, in the year 7061 (= 1553)'. This signifies that the stole was embroidered by Heléne Tsrnogevits and consecrated by Demètre, the son of Gkvozntenov. The resemblance of the stole to the one in Belgrade leads to the conclusion that the two were made in the same period and in the same Serbian workshop. The example in Belgrade was displayed at an exhibition in that city under the title Dobr. Stojanovič, Embroidery as Art in Serbia from the 14th to 19th centuries (in Serbian), Museum of Decorative Arts, Belgrade 1959, No. Kat. 25, Fig., with a summary in French. See also L. Mirkovič, Religious embroidery (in Serbian), Belgrade 1940, f. 43-44 pl. XX, 2. Also cited by G. Millet, Broderies Religieuses de style Byzantin, Paris 1947, p. 45.



The Forty Martyrs of Sevastos, panel, 43 x 30.5 cm, Greek, circa 1500

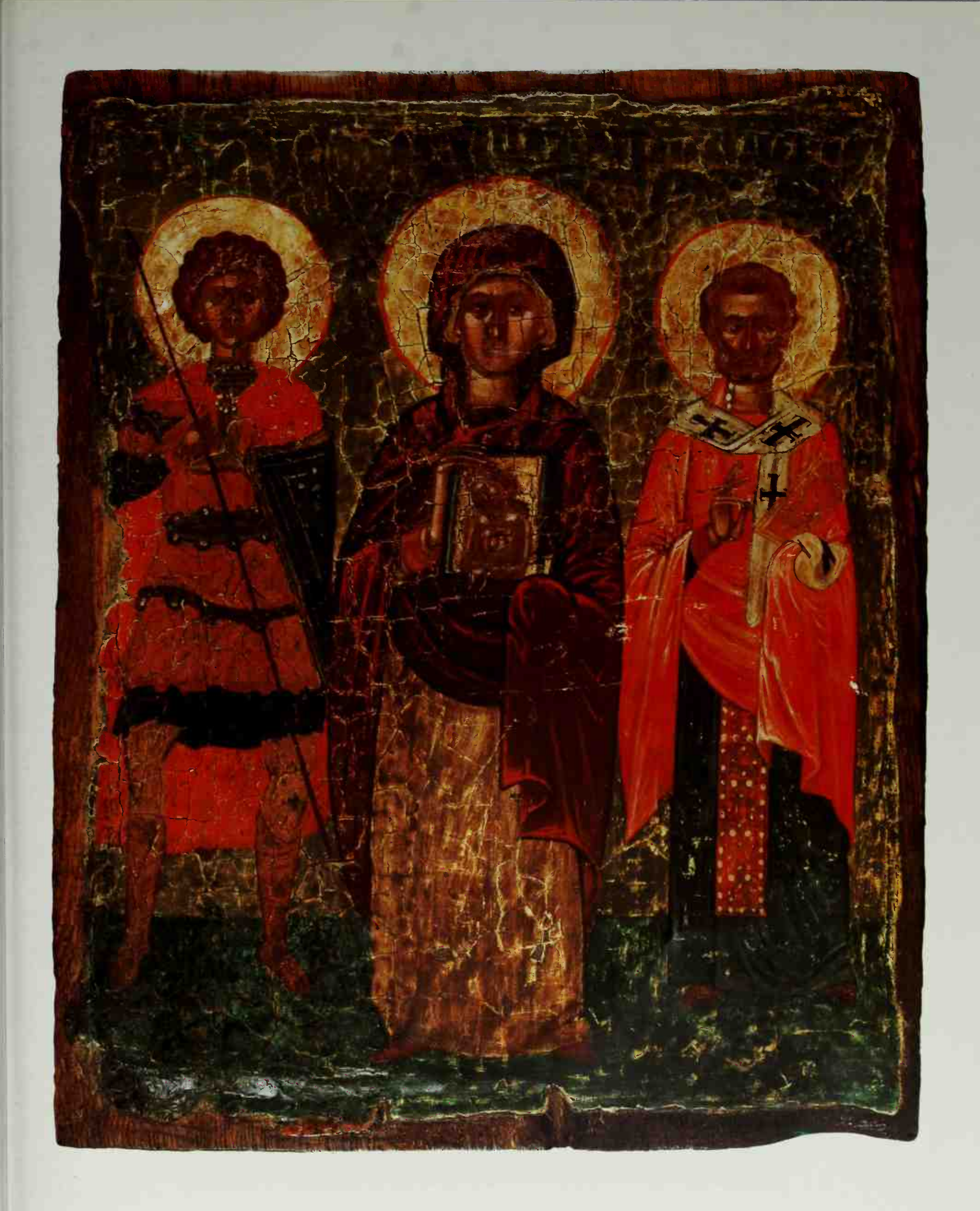




A Double-Sided Icon, painter Longin (unsigned), panel, 44 x 29 cm, Serbian, second half of the 16th century
Left: The Raising of Lazarus, Above: Christ's Entry into Jerusalem



The Archangel Michael, panel, 84 x 50 cm, Macedonian, about 1500



Three Saints, panel, 35 x 28.5 cm, Greek, 15th century





Bilateral Bema Door, panel, 120 x 32 cm (each wing), Greek, about 1500
Left: Annunciation, Above: Saint John the Baptist and Saint Nicholas



The Lamentation, panel, 48 x 28.5 cm, Cretan, circa 1600



The Crucifixion, panel, 45.5 x 32.5 cm, Cretan, late 15th century



Saint Athanasios, panel, 73 x 50 cm, Greek, second half of the 16th century



Saint George killing the Dragon, painter Georghios Kortezas, panel, 29.5 x 24 cm, Greek, first half of the 17th century



Saint George killing the Dragon, painter Emmanuel Lambardos, panel, 34 x 27 cm, Greek, 1620-1640



Saint George killing the Dragon, panel, 88 x 64 cm, Greek, 17th century



The Virgin Hodegetria, wood with frame in low relief, 86.5 x 64 cm, Greek, 16th century



Virgin The Fountain of Life, panel, 100 x 65 cm, Greek, first half of the 16th century



Virgin Glykophilousa, wood with low carved frame, 88 x 69 cm, Veneto-Cretan, end of the 15th, beginning of the 16th century



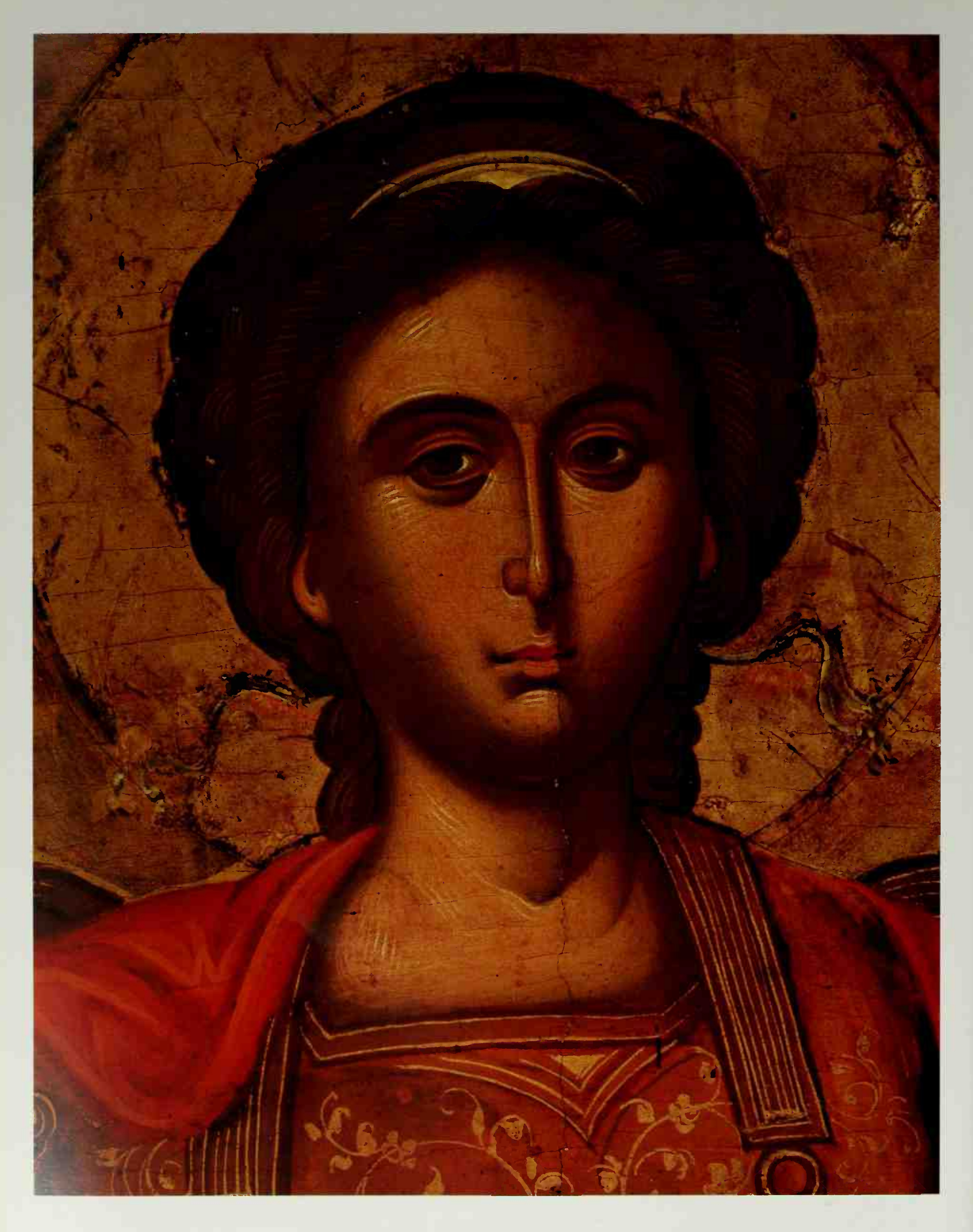
The Virgin of Passion, painter Victor, panel, 48 x 38 cm, Greek, second half of the 17th century


ΘΥ



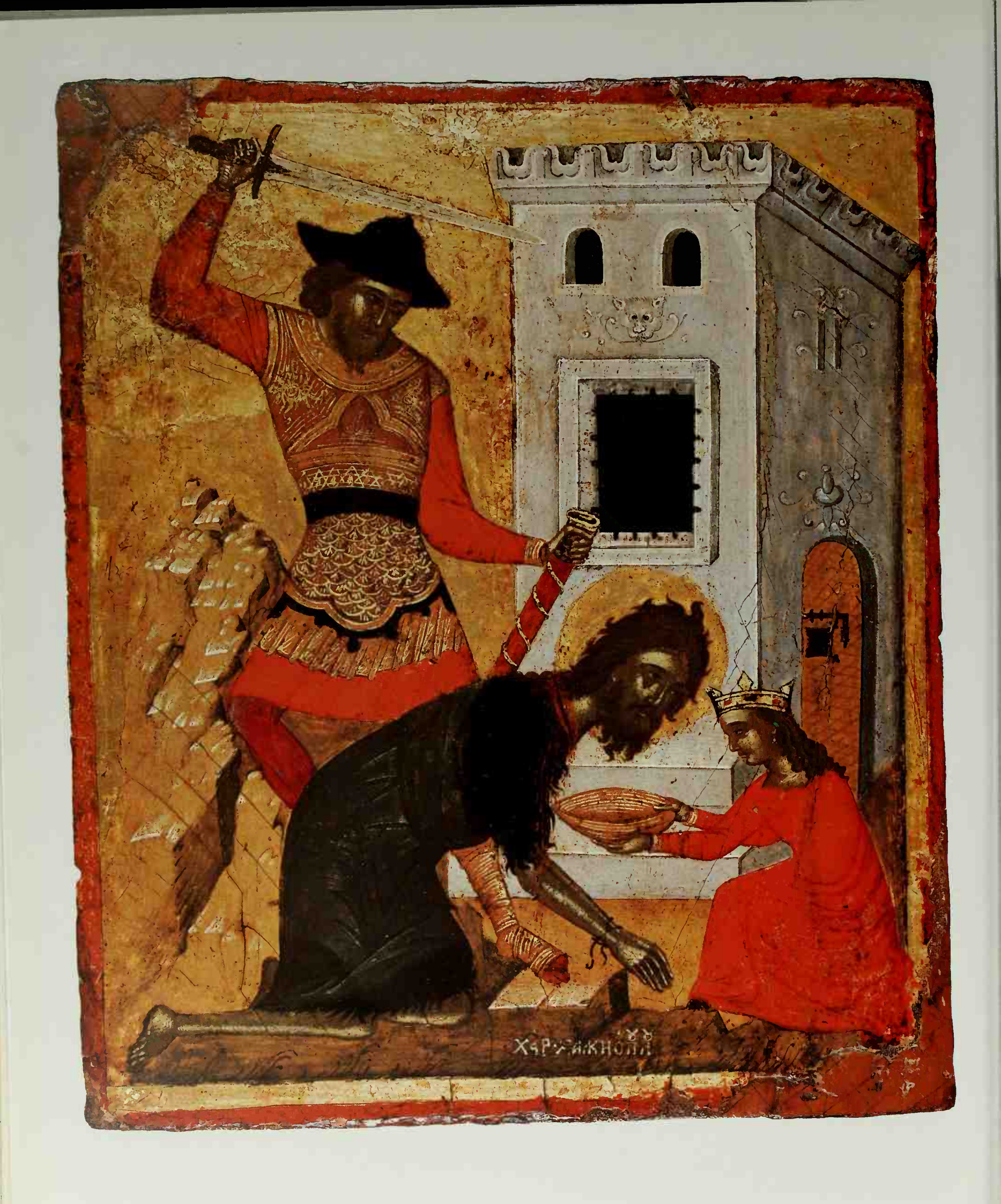
Great Deesis, 94.5 x 73 cm (each panel), Cyprus, 16th century
Left: Mother of God, Above: Christ Pantocrator, Right: Saint John the Baptist







The Archangel Michael, painter Michael Damaskinos, signed, panel, 104 x 75 cm, Cretan, last quarter of the 16th century



The Decapitation of the Prodrome, painter Chalkiopoulos, panel, 34 x 29 cm, Greek, middle of the 16th century



The Presentation of Christ to the Temple, painter Theodosios Potamianos, panel, 51 x 39 cm, Greek, 1698



Eustachius' Vision while hunting and the Martyrdom of Him and his Family, panel, 51 x 41 cm, Greek, 17th century



Saint Anthony the Great, panel, 22 x 17 cm, Egypt or Syria, circa 1700



Noli Me Tangere, panel, 74 x 54.5 cm, Greek, 17th century

Russian Icons and Related Works of Art

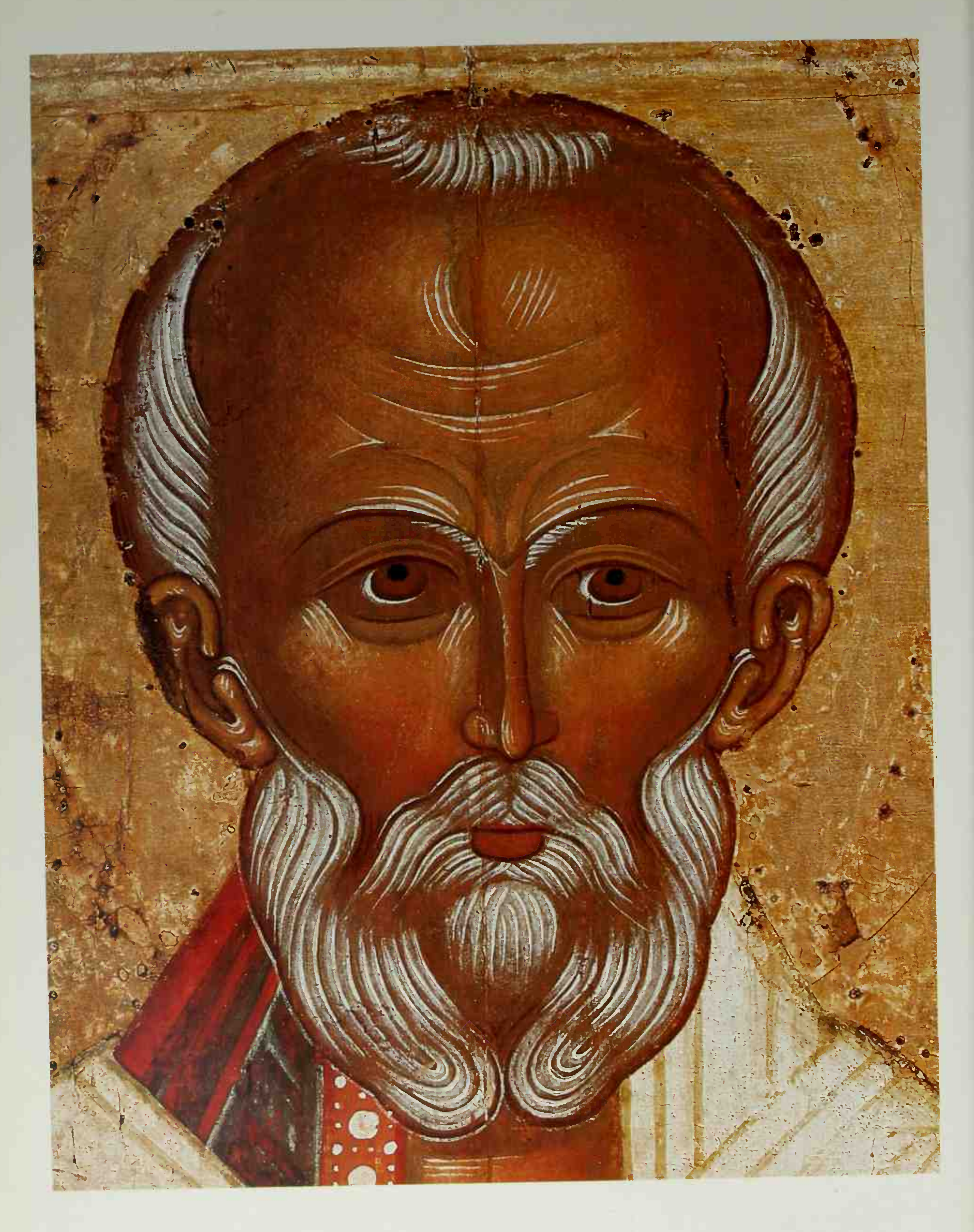


The Archangel Gabriel, panel from the Deesis tier of an Iconostasis, 60 x 30 cm, North Russian, 16th century





The Holy Trinity, panel, 88 x 64 cm, Novgorod, late 15th century





Saint Nicholas, shown half length, panel, 70 x 53 cm, Novgorod, 15th century





The Miracle of Flor and Lavr, panel, 92.5 x 67 cm, Novgorod, 15th century





The Nativity, panel, 54 x 38 cm, Novgorod, circa 1400



Tabletka, panel, 44.5 x 35 cm, Novgorod, circa 1500



The Saviour shown bust length, panel, 78 x 59 cm, Novgorod, 1500



Saint George slaying the Dragon, panel, 31 x 26 cm, Novgorod, 16th century



The Last Judgement, panel, 153 x 125 cm, Novgorod, dated 1598



Christ Enthroned, panel, 78.5 x 54 cm, Novgorod, 15th century



A large Iconostasis panel, depicting the Saviour Enthroned in Glory, 74 x 58 cm, Central Russian, circa 1600


МА
РКО

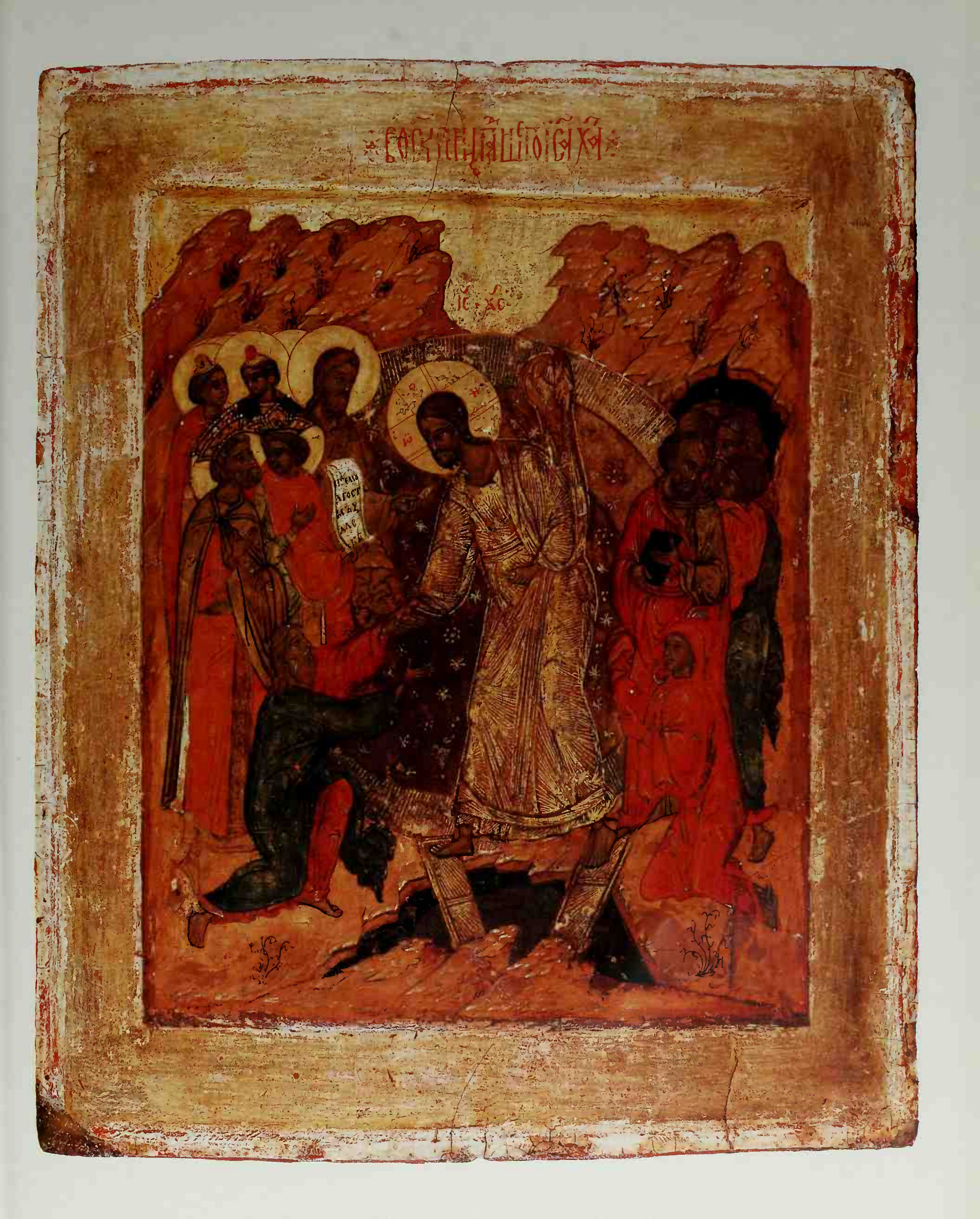


Pair of Royal Doors, 170 x 81 cm (each panel), Novgorod, 16th century
Left (detail): The Evangelist Marcus, Right (detail): The Evangelist Matthew





Descent from the Cross, panel, 75 x 59 cm, Novgorod, circa 1500



The Anastasis, panel, 32 x 26 cm, Moscow, second half of the 16th century



Eleousa Madonna, panel, 31.5 x 26 cm, Moscow, early 16th century



The Smolensk Mother of God, panel, 61 x 52 cm, Moscow, 1500



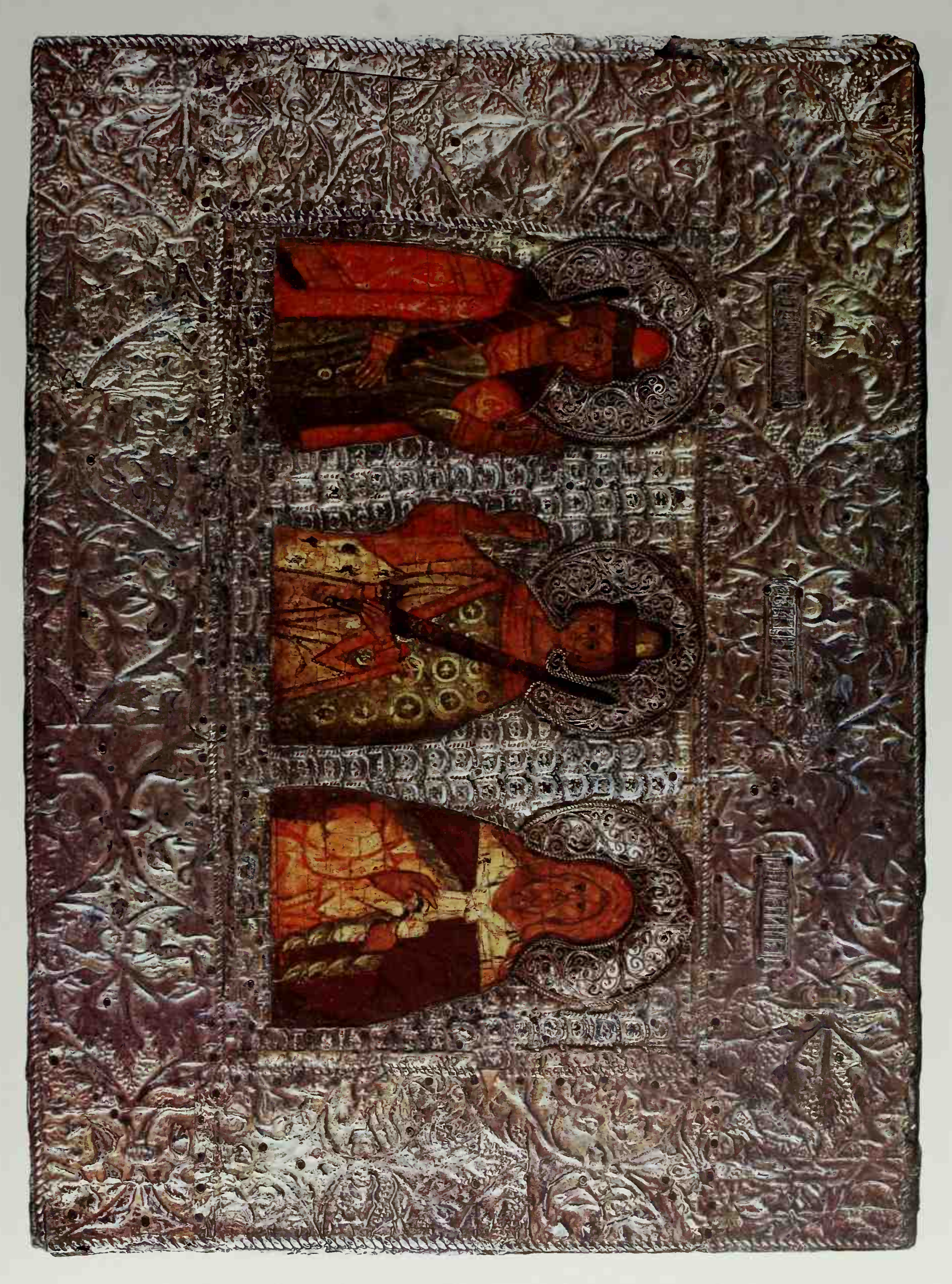
Saint Simeon Styalitis, workshop of Metropolitan Makary, panel, 31 x 16 cm, Russian, 1580-1610



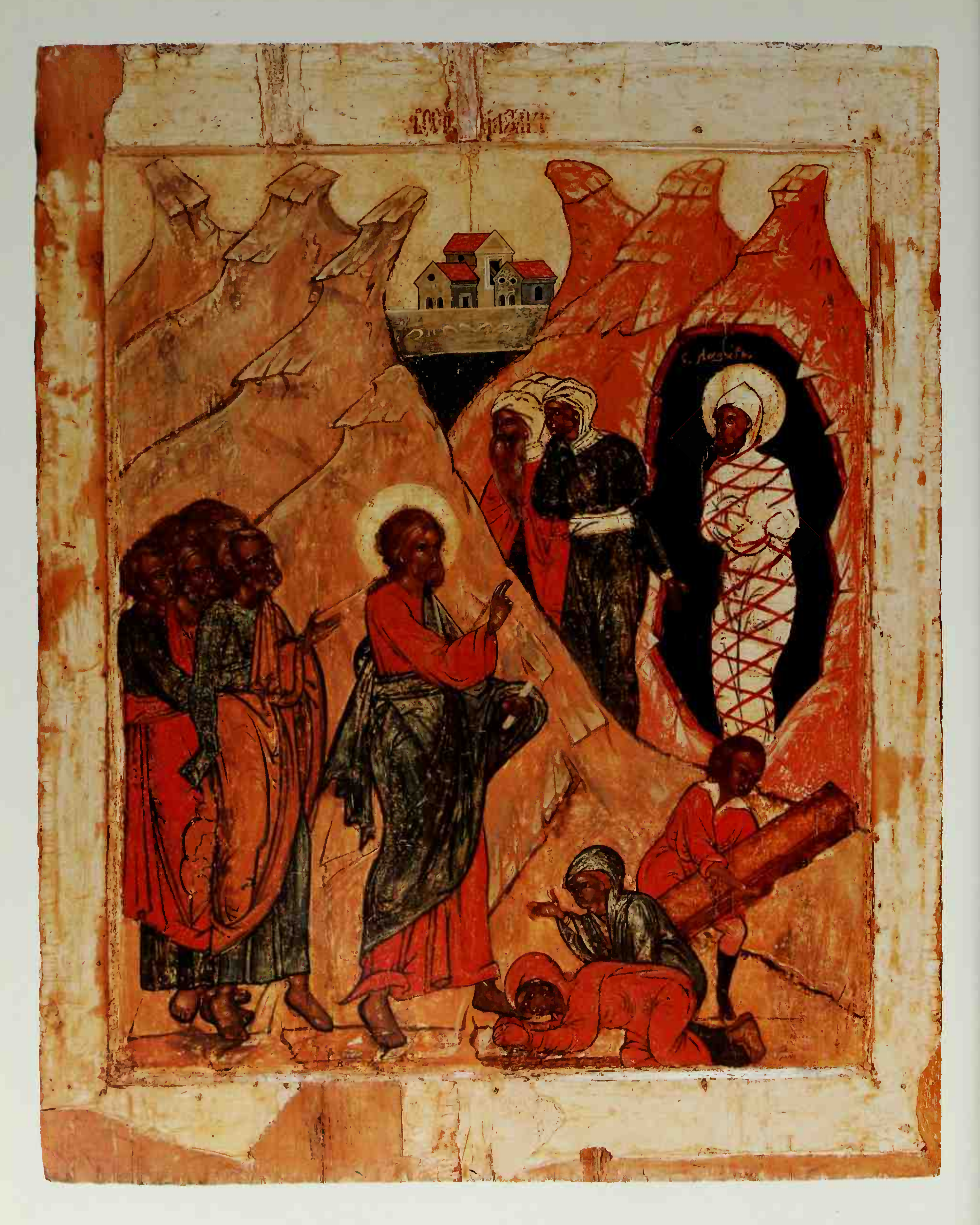
The Annunciation, an Iconostasis panel from the festival tier, 78 x 61.5 cm, Russian, early 17th century



The Anastasis, panel, 30 x 23 cm, Pskov, early 16th century



The First Russian Martyrs, panel with stamped silver basma, 25 x 31 cm, Novgorod, 15th century



The Resurrection of Lazarus, panel, 72 x 57.5 cm, North Russian, 16th century



The Praise of the Mother of God, panel, 63.5 x 38 cm, Yaroslav, early 17th century



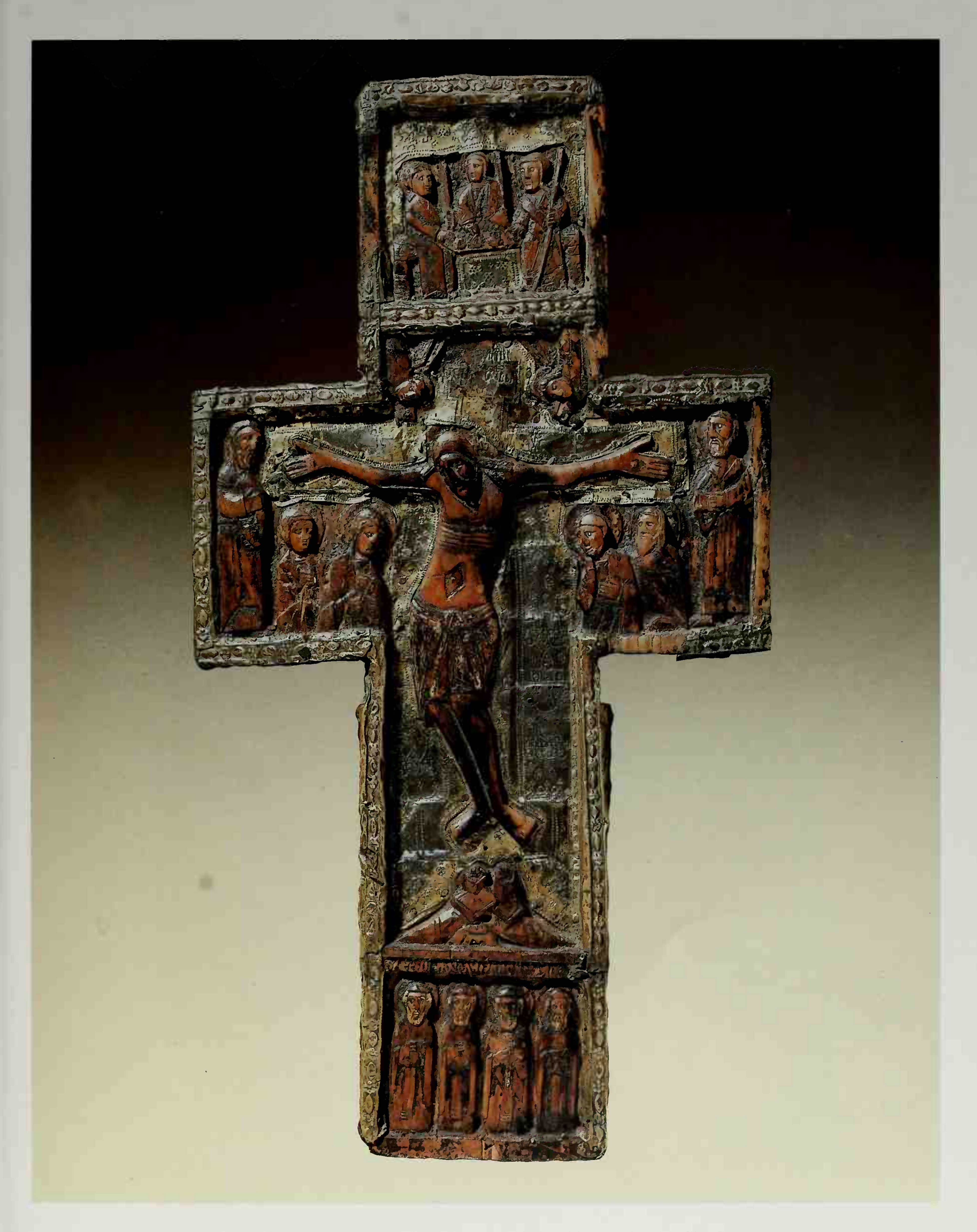
Mother of God Smolenskaya, ivory, 7.5 x 6 cm, Russian, 15th century



The Great Hierarch, 5.5 x 4.5 cm, boxwood, Russian, first half of the 16th century



A wooden Crucifix, 22 x 13 cm, Russian, late 16th century



A wooden crucifix with stamped silver basma, 47 x 25 cm, Russian, mid 16th century



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1. A silver and enamel Crucifix, 8 x 6 cm, Russian, 17th century

2. Crucifixion, bronze, 7 x 5.5 cm, Russian, 16th century

3. Crucifixion, bronze, 9 x 5.5 cm, Russian, 16th century

4. Crucifixion, bronze and enamel, 12 x 8 cm, Russian, 17th century

5. Crucifixion, bronze and enamel, 14.5 x 9 cm, Russian, 18th century



Crucifixion with Presence and Feasts, bronze, 41 x 25 cm, Russian, 19th century



1



2

1. The Virgin of Kazan, bronze and enamel, 11 x 10 cm, Russian, 19th century

2. Mother of God Hodegetria, bronze and enamel, 11 x 8.5 cm, Russian, 19th century

3. Virgin of the Sign, bronze and enamel, 6.5 x 5 cm, Russian, 18th century

4. Mother of God Domskaja, bronze and enamel, 10.5 x 9 cm, Russian, 19th century

5. The Virgin of the Sign, bronze, 7 x 5 cm, Russian, 16th century

6. The Virgin of Kazan, bronze and enamel, 14 x 12 cm, Russian, 18th century



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Mother of God Hodegetria, bronze and enamel, 26.5 x 23.5 cm, Russian, 19th century



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1. Mother of God Hodegetria, surrounded by saints and with the Deesis on top, bronze, 7 x 5 cm, Russian, 16th century

2. The Birth of the Virgin, bronze and enamel, 10 x 8.5 cm, Russian, 18th century

3. The Virgin of the Sign, bronze, 8 x 6 cm, Russian, 16th century

4. The Nativity, bronze and enamel, 7 x 4.5 cm, Russian, 16th century

5. The Nativity, bronze, 6 x 4.5 cm, Russian, 16th century

6. The Virgin of the Burning Bush, bronze and enamel, 10 x 9.5 cm, Russian, 18th century



The Dormition of the Mother of God, bronze and enamel, 28.5 x 23.5 cm, Russian, 19th century



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1. Saint Nicholas Mozhaisky, bronze, 8 x 5.5 cm, Russian, 17th century

2. Saint Nicholas Mozhaisky, bronze, 7.5 x 5.5 cm, Russian, 16th century

3. Saint Nicholas Mozhaisky, bronze, 11 x 5.5 cm, Russian, 17th century

4. Saint Nicholas Mozhaisky, bronze, 7.5 x 5.5 cm, Russian, 16th century

5. Saint Nicholas, shown half-length, with the Gospels, bronze and enamel, 7 x 5 cm, Russian, 19th century

6. Saint Nicholas Mozhaisky, bronze, 7.5 x 5.5 cm, Russian, 16th century



Saint Nicholas, shown half-length, holding the open Gospels, bronze and enamel, 27 x 24 cm, Russian, 18th century



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1. Christ Pantocrator, shown half-length, holding the Gospels, bronze, 11.5 x 7.5 cm, Russian, dated 1594

2. The Extended Deesis, bronze and enamel, 13 x 11 cm, Russian, 19th century

3. Saint Sergius of Radonezh, bronze, 7 x 5 cm, Russian, 17th century

4. Mother of God Do Not Weep For Me, bronze and enamel, 11 x 9.5 cm, Russian, 18th century

5. SS. Zossima and Savaati of Solovetsk, bronze, 9 x 7 cm, Russian, 18th century

6. The Resurrection and Descent into Hell, bronze and enamel, 10.5 x 9.5 cm, Russian, 19th century

7. A bronze and enamel quadraptych with Church Feasts, 14 x 36 cm, Russian, 19th century

8. A bronze and enamel cast with the Deesis, 9 x 29 cm, Russian, 18th century

9. A bronze and enamel cast with the Deesis, 14 x 39 cm, Russian, 18th century


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1. SS. Gregory, Panteleimon and Basil, bronze and enamel, 12.5 x 9 cm, Russian, 19th century

2. SS. Modestos, Blasius, Nilus, Flor and Lavr, bronze and enamel, 14.5 x 10 cm, Russian, 19th century

3. The Ascent of the Prophet Elijah, bronze and enamel, 14.5 x 12.5 cm, Russian, 19th century
Elijah rides towards Heaven in a chariot of fire drawn by fiery horses. An angel holds the reins and guides the disc of flame heavenwards towards an apparition of the blessing Ancient of Days, in the left hand corner. Also shown is the raven bringing food to the Prophet as he sits before the cave; an angel conversing with Elijah, and Elisha receiving the mantle of Elijah.

4. Saint Varos, shown half-length, bronze and enamel, 6.5 x 5 cm, Russian, 19th century

5. SS. Boris and Gleb, the Martyr Saints on horseback, bronze, 14 x 9 cm, Russian, 16th century

6. SS. Boris and Gleb, bronze and enamel, 14.5 x 9 cm, Russian, 18th century



The Old Testament Trinity, bronze and enamel, 21 x 16.5 cm, Russian, 18th century



1

1. A Pair of Parcel Gilt and Niello Plates, diameter 21.4 cm, weight 228 grams each, Russian, late 17th century

2. A Silver Gilt Gharka, 4.6 cm high, weight 90 grams, Russian, 17th century

3. A Silver Gilt Korchik, 13.4 cm wide, weight 96 grams, Novgorod, 17th century

4. A Silver Gilt and Niello Diskos, diameter 20.5 cm, weight 330 grams, Russian, late 17th century

5. Silver Gilt Charka, 3.5 cm high, weight 96 grams, mid 17th century

6. Silver Gilt Korchik, 7.2 cm high, 10.2 cm wide, weight 128 grams, Novgorod, late 17th century

7. Silver Gilt Charka, 4 cm high, weight 100 grams, 17th century

8. An Episcopal Staff, 152 cm long, 17th century

9. A Pair of Parcel Gilt Spoons, the larger 21 cm long, weight 118 grams, mid 17th century



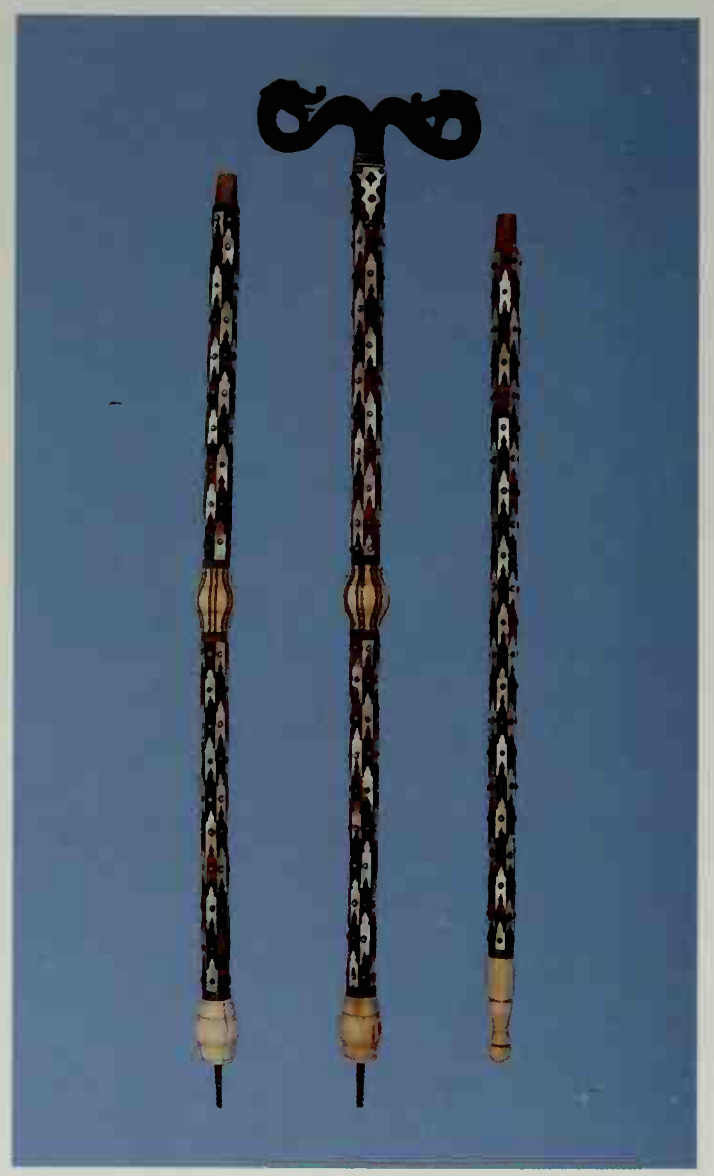
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7

Descriptions

Fayoum Portraits, Stucco Heads and Encaustic Panels

37 Fayoum Portraits

Fayoum portraits – the paintings on the mummies from the Fayoum oasis – are so vital that our fascination for these people from another age is equal to our admiration for the work of art as such. Add to this the fact that this interest is apparently mutual; we gaze, intrigued, at these fellow humans, while they stare back in astonishment at our world. Nevertheless, these works of art have taken more than a millenium to really penetrate our consciousness. Although the mummies were well concealed in their dry graves, they formed invaluable booty for the local grave robbers. Jewels, amulets and precious stones could be traded directly, but since the Renaissance there has been great demand for the mummies themselves in Europe. Using limbs which had been sorted and cut up in Egypt, apothecaries prepared powders, salves and tinctures for which they claimed 'extraordinary healing powers'.
The Italian Pietro della Valle was the first to bring two complete Fayoum portrait mummies to Europe in 1615. In the course of the 19th century more portraits were discovered, but truly dramatic was the purchase in 1887 of several hundred(!) Fayoum portraits in Egypt by the Vienna art dealer Theodor Graf. The portraits gained international fame through sales exhibitions, though the last of them was auctioned only in 1930.

The term 'Fayoum portrait' requires a little more explanation. The El Fayoum oasis district (together with the Birket Quarun lake) has always been one of Egypt's most fertile regions. Over the centuries it has acted like a magnet on a succession of colonisers, with consequent racial and cultural mixing. The Greeks were here in the Ptolemaic period and the Romans later too.
The portrait mummies found so far date from the period between the early 1st century AD and the middle of the 4th century AD. Attemps are being made to arrive at a more differentiated dating system by establishing where the mummies were found with modern dating techniques and by styles of clothing, hair, jewels, etc. In this work, the identification of varying schools and styles of painting can also be of help. The actual names of the painters are not known and the portraits are functional, so that artistic value can vary greatly.

Besides the Fayoum area there have been other finds along the Nile, including Antinopolis where large numbers have been discovered, but the generic term Fayoum is used for these similar mummies. The fixed concept of the Ancient Egyptians that by preserving the body (the actual mummy) the physical part of a human being could be reunited with his soul after its trials and tribulations in the realm of the dead was completely alien to Graeco-Roman thought.
In the Fayoum these two cultures became intermingled. The death cult with its preservation of the body, but the sculptured, idealized death mask demonstrated similarities with the 'imago' of the Romans. The portrait is to a considerable extent an identification and presentation of the deceased.
We must assume that the portrait was made at some time in the life of the person portrayed, framed and placed in the house. Portraits within a frame have been discovered and using X-rays it has been established that the actual mummies are sometimes 30 to 40 years 'younger' than their portraits. After death, the existing portrait was adapted to the shape of the mummy. Here, especially, the top would be shortened and retouched. For young people and children posthumous portraits were made, while in the later periods it is assumed that studios produced readymade portraits so that personal details could be filled in later. Particularly in the early period, the paintings were done on hard wood (cypress, cedar, linden, fig). A 'gesso' was applied to achieve a smooth surface. This usually consisted of a mixture of plaster of Paris, chalk and glue. It filled up the pores and highlighted the brilliance of the colours. Paint pigments were on a mineral base (not organic) and have proved themselves very durable and not liable to fading. In the beginning, particularly, purified beeswax was used (wax paintings); panel and wax were heated, the wax was applied thickly and so repeats were possible. Later more tempera (egg albumen) was used, which made repeats more difficult and provided a matt surface (which could be varnished with wax). A painting could be set up in tempera and finished with wax for extra finesse. Another later material was linen (also linen on wood). On linen, which is easier to adapt to the shape of the mummy, there are also busts and even complete figures. Changes and additions could also be carried out during placing, for example the addition of relief for gilt jewels, or adaptations to match the status of the deceased. The fading of colour can be caused by dirt (cleaning is simple) or by wax layers applied later which are more difficult to remove.
In conclusion we can say that Fayoum portraits are not so much expressions of religious iconography but rather variations on an ideal type.

40

Stucco Head of a Man, height 40 cm, Graeco-Roman, 2nd century

Life-sized painted stucco head from a coffin or cartonnage. Painted black eyebrows. Modelled beard on

cheeks and on chin. Flesh painted pale pink. The treatment of hair and beard points to the time of Hadrian and Antonius Pius (138-161).
For dating and related examples, cf. Edgar, C.C., Graeco-Egyptian Coffins, Masks, and Portraits (Catalogue général, Musée du Caire), Cairo, 1905.

42

Head of a Saint, encaustic painting on wood, 20.6 x 28.2 cm, Coptic, 4th century

The face of a youthful saint with a halo. Only his head and part of his shoulders are preserved. The panel was fixed originally on a wooden sarcophagus. For wax painting on wood see the Fayoum portraits. A similar example was exhibited on the Exhibition of Early Christian and Byzantine Art, Baltimore, 1947, no. 673. See also vol. I of the Ernst Brummer Collection, no. 5.

Byzantine Works of Art

48

Mosaic representing a Inscription, 52 x 137 cm, Syrian, 6th century

Christian epigraphy is very well represented in Syria, particularly in churches and basilicas. These buildings often featured a mosaic floor commissioned by the clergy and congregation. One of the finest examples of floors of this kind is not in Syria at all but in Aquileia, Northern Italy.
Early Christian mosaic floors generally consist of figurative and ornamental motifs together with inscriptions and this is the case in Syria, too. The early Christians in this area generally expressed their wishes and thanks in two languages, Syriac and Greek, though in the case of this floor they chose Greek. It is of the type known as 'tabula ansata with inscription' which means that the central panel of the mosaic, which contains the inscription, is flanked by two 'ears', the total effect showing a resemblance to a tray with two handles. Unfortunately, in the case in point the 'handle' on the right as well as part of the inscription have been destroyed. The 'handle' on the left includes a cross, a symbol already often employed in the early Christian period.

The inscription is within a red-brown frame and, although, as we stated earlier, part of it is missing, it can be largely reconstructed. It possesses something of the character of a formula. First an invocation of God, then a request and, finally, a fragment from a psalm. It begins with the abbreviations of four words: 'p(ate)r, k(uri) X(riste), Th(e)e'; followed by
'tou oura (nou elei)
son, phulaxon, fise, d(e philanthro)
peuse pantas tou(s agapontas)
ti euprepia tou o(ikou sou).
We can be pretty certain about the correctness of the completions to lines three and four as these are quotations of Ps. 25 (26), verse 8.
The translation is:
Father, Lord, Christ, God of Heaven, have pity on, watch over, spare and have mercy on all those who have loved the habitation of thy house.

49

Mosaic representing a Church, 101 x 121 cm, Northern Syrian, 6th century

Recently a whole series of mosaic floors was discovered in Syria. In itself very remarkable, and the fact that these floors were still extant is the result of a combination of factors. In the first place, the relative indestructability of the materials used, the fact that the area between Antakya (Antioch) and Aleppo has been Moslem since the conquest by the Mohammedans around 640 A.D. Add to this the inaccessibility of the region, and it is really not very surprising that these Christian mosaics remained hidden for so long.
In the period that the early Christian churches were built, the mosaic formed a separate art form, though one which was closely related to the architecture of the time, and, indeed, many public buildings featured a mosaic floor, which to this day provide us with an image of life then, thanks to the large numbers of these floors which have been preserved.

The mosaic fragment illustrated here shows a building with a single nave, presumably a church. This presumption is based on two observations. Dwellings were usually built adjacent to each other, while this building is completely detached; and the window openings are placed high, which is characteristic of a church.

The mosaic provides us with a good idea of what a sixth-century church looked like. The one represented here is a sturdy building, of large, coloured stones typical of Syrian churches of the period. The side wall contains three arched windows, the facade one. These windows also feature cross bars, an indication of glass or alabaster panes, while the interior is further illuminated via the very interesting entrance. Above the portal is a tympanum – it is not altogether clear if this also includes a sculpture. There is a curtain, tied together in the same way as represented in the Ravenna mosaics, which hangs from four points so that it drapes in broad pleats in front of a simple railing which encloses the sacred interior. Railings of this type have not survived the passage of time, but this mosaic is an indication that they did exist.
The church has a high gable roof with large ceramic tiles. Interest for nature is indicated by the bushes that grow in front of the railing. It is not altogether clear whether this 'garden' also functioned as burial ground, but the remains of a cross at the far right would seem to indicate something of the kind.
It is very rarely that we encounter such an explicit representation of an early Christian church, and this mosaic is of considerable significance with regard to our knowledge of single nave churches in Syria. But it is certainly noteworthy that the Louvre possesses a number of architectural mosaics which can be compared with this example.

51

Torso of the Saviour, marble, 28.5 x 31 cm, Constantinople, 11th or 12th century

A marble fragment of a bas relief, depicting the headless torso of the Saviour; his right hand composes

the Christic monogram, his left hand holds a closed gospel ornamented with corner bosses and a cross centred by a circular medallion.
See the Dumbarton Oaks papers no. 27, pl. 5, between pages 160-161 for an 11th century marble relief of the Virgin.
See Lange, Die Byzantinische Reliefikone, 1964, no. 17, for a complete Pantocrator relief of the 12th century from Serres in Macedonia. Lange notes that the relief originally formed part of a Deesis scene, a fragmentary carving of the Virgin having been found on the site in 1960. Lange, op. cit., no. 36 illustrates a complete Deesis with angels in the Archaeological Museum, Istanbul, in which the central figure of the Pantocrator is close to our example.

52, 53

Two Pages from an Illuminated Manuscript portraying an Evangelist, probably Luke or Mark, and Christ's Ascension, 32 x 22 cm, Armenian, 2nd half 13th century

There is a long tradition of illuminated books in Armenia. The oldest of them date from the 9th century and, almost without exception, they are evangelical. The Armenian school had an important centre during the 13th century in Cilicia, a region in the south west of Armenia, especially in the towns of Sis, Skevra, Mlidj, Hromkla, Drazark, Grner and Akner (1). The manuscripts are generally of a very high quality, which to a considerable degree can be traced to the influence which Byzantium had on these miniaturists.

The political situation was very intricate in Cilicia from 10th up to the 13th century. First the region was in the hands of the Armenians, then the Arabs, then the Byzantines, who were later obliged to hand it over to Armenians who had been driven out of their own lands by the Seljuks. From 1198, when Cilicia achieved the status of kingdom, life became more peaceful, which was reflected in the production of art. The illuminated manuscript underwent an enormous evolution, reaching its absolute top in the 13th century (2). The miniaturists borrowed from various schools, but influences from Byzantium and Syria are particularly apparent. The high quality of the books would seem to justify the assumption that they were commissioned by people of very considerable social standing, probably the royal court and those around it. Unlike Byzantium, here the name of the commissioner was entered in one of the first pages, together with the date. This information has facilitated our efforts to follow the development of Armenian art. Diringer, who quotes Der Nersessian, has the following to say on the subject of the manuscripts (3): 'The designs are drawn with delicate precision, and preference is given to interlaced designs and to geometric motives such as the multi-coloured discs, chevrons and the rainbow'. A second quote is even more revealing (4): 'Some of the codices have a great variety of colours and ornamental motifs, which have derived from different sources but are combined in a manner that makes them richer than anything produced by Byzantine book-illumination'.

The two pages in question are stylistically very closely related to an MS (no. 2563) now in the possession of the Armenian Patriarchate in Jerusalem; cf. D. Diringer 'The Illuminated Book' fig. II 38 d and S. Der Nersessian 'Etudes Byzantines et Arméniennes' fig. 252, 253 and 254. The same delicate precision of the drawing is combined with refined use of colour.

The evangelist is shown on a high seat before a decorative desk. Deep in thought, his chin resting on his hand, he stares obliquely at the spectator. His right hand, in it a quill, rests on his knee. The empty page of the book indicates that he is engaged in writing. The desk shows a rich abundance of details. A pleasant touch are the open doors so that we catch a glimpse of what is inside. The background is built up of architectural elements. Obviously, the miniaturist was trying to achieve a certain balance here. Opposite the towering building at the left is a high pillar topped by a capital at the right. A red velum is placed over this to indicate that the writer is indoors.

The second page shows Christ's ascent to heaven. This event is described by Mark (16 : 19), Luke (24 : 50-53) and the Acts (1 : 9-11) and this last account is the most detailed. Two men in white (Acts 1 : 10) and twelves apostles gather around Mary. The two men gesture elegantly with their fragile hands upwards to Christ, while with dramatic movements the apostles take leave of their master. The treatment of the faces and clothing is very impressive and the clear colours contrast beautifully with the golden ground. Mary, on the other hand, seems unmoved. She sits on a dais with red foot cushions in a rather unimpressive landscape. Her calm is in great contrast to the restiveness of the apostles. She does not take leave of her son; in this ascension scene she symbolizes the Church which remains behind on earth. Finally, Christ is taken to heaven by two angels in a mandorla built up of concentric circles.

1. D. Diringer, The Illuminated Book, London, undated, p. 126.
2. S. Der Nersessian, Etudes Byzantines et Arméniennes, Vol. I, Louvain 1973, p. 509.
3. D. Diringer, op. cit. p. 126.
4. Ibid, p. 126-127.

Byzantine Icons

59, 60, 61

Virgin and Child, panel, 93 x 56 cm, Dalmatian, 13th century.

This icon is a variant of the iconographic type of the Hodegetria, showing the Mother of God in half figure with the Christ Child seated on her right arm and turned in three-quarter profile towards her. Mary inclines her head to the direction of her son and extends her left hand to him as if in prayer. Her long fingers, stretched out as if into infinity, express the intensity of her intercession. Dressed in a vermilion chiton and a himation rendered in chrysography, Christ blesses with his right hand, his left being partly hidden under the himation, an unusual iconographic feature.

Although the son looks at the mother, their eyes do not meet. Mary gazes at infinity. Her oval head displays

large, deeply set, almond-shaped eyes emphasized by the forceful, bold eyebrows; long nose whose bridge branches out like the stem of a flower from which spring the eyebrows, strongly built arches, dynamic gates of the intellectual world, expanding beyond the limits of the eyes and reaching the black contours which delineate the face and the neck; small mouth with an angular upper lip stretched well beyond the lower one conveys an expression of concern. The head is supported by a long, columnar neck at the base of which an olive green line repeats the line separating the neck from the torso, a feature encountered also in the figure of Christ. The maphorion in wine red with a gold-rimmed border is folded rhythmically around the face and allows one to see an inner vermilion-red lining and a kerchief embroidered in black. Decorated with the usual gold cross-stars, the maphorion displays a delicate gold rim over the left, ivory-white sleeve which is modelled by grey-green shadows and ends in a manchette distinguished by subtle, gold lines. The pleats are painted in darker red or deep brown colours. Black contours outline not only the face and neck of mother and son but also the lower parts of the hands, the bases of the fingers, the inner part of the thumb. While the fingers grow longer, the black lines gradually disappear. The fingers become thus limitless, stretching out forever towards the Transcendental. The gold background against which the figures were originally set is now gone or tarnished. Traces of a nimbus around Mary's head can still be seen.

The spirituality of the composition is followed by the modelling. The flesh parts are painted with brush strokes which change thickness and intensity according to their function. The dark brown outlines of the eyes are strong but a lighter brown in thinner brush strokes has been applied on the upper part of the eyelid and below the eye. The lights above the eyebrows and below the eyes are formed by broad parallel lines. Those of Mary are boldly arranged in a semicircle, a motion followed at her right nostril. On the face of Christ the lines take the form of typical, radiating wrinkles. The area modelling the faces is in dark olive green with warm orange red on top which allows, however, the green to be seen through and to function as shade. This olive green shade exists not only around the faces but around everything which is to be emphasized: the nose, the eyes, the mouth. The transition from the underpaint to the flesh tones is achieved with boldness but without sharp changes. The olive green leads to a warm orange on the cheeks and finally to the white lights applied to certain areas either to convey the impression of volume and a certain feeling of naturalism or to suggest the presence of transcendental light. The modelling of the neck is achieved by parallel white lines. The overall effect is that of a transparency of the flesh suggesting Mary's inner illumination.

Although the same principles have been followed in the rendering of both faces, that of Christ displays stronger 'expressionistic' features. The contour is thick and separates the face from the back of the head so as to give the impression of Christ's wearing a mask set against a large ear. His broad forehead is marked by a heartshaped design which includes a dark, almost circular area, an indication of a lock of hair. The entire rendering conveys power but above all Otherness. This otherness is further stressed by an abstract, linear design most predominant in the drapery of both persons. The pleats have no relation to the body underneath. In the chiton of Christ they are rendered in white against vermilion, whereas in Mary's maphorion they are painted in darker wine-red or brown tones. Organized in geometric shapes the pleats alternate rhythmically: ovals and rectangles in the case of Christ, horizontals and diagonals in the case of Mary, except that part of the maphorion over the head, whose lines arranged in a perfect semicircle follow the conical structure of the head and stress the spirituality of the Mother of God.

The most important characteristics of the icon are the use of strong, dark contours reminding one of some monumental works of Middle Byzantine art, such as the mosaics of the Nea Moni, Chios, the boldness in the execution and above all the power of expression. The non-classical features of the work recall Byzantine icons assigned to the 13th century, a date which may well be applicable to the present icon.
Condition: On the right upper corner in the background and in most parts of the frame the gesso has disappeared. Marks of two candle burns are at the blessing hand of Christ. Parts of a red band marking the frame of the icon can still be seen.

62, 63

Saint Peter, panel, 93 x 69 cm, Macedonian, 1300

It is well preserved with only little damage here and there. Most of the left part of the frame is missing. The wood is worm-eaten.
Saint Peter is portrayed in half length turning slightly to his left. With the left hand he holds a long and thin staff with a black cross on its top and also a closed scroll tied with a red yarn, like the imperial chrysovoulla, a reference to his epistles. With the right hand that appears from his mantle he points to the scroll. Two golden keys, those of Paradise, are suspended from a gold thread, tied with a knot around his neck. The apostle wears a deep green tunic and an almond green mantle with rich smooth folds indicating a fine, soft material. A short and robust neck supports the massive head on the torso. The strong modelling of the face that stresses the big aquiline nose and the deep wrinkles corresponds to the Byzantine description of his type that has a beautiful beard, 'a refined long nose, a frowning expression and a changeable mood' (1).
The well-built stature with the stress placed on the masses, the strong expression, and the fleshy hands shaped in a rather unusual form relate this figure to works of a certain style of Palaeologan painting, which shows realistic tendencies and has been considered as characteristic of Macedonia (St. Euthymios in Thessaloniki, Protaton, especially the Great Deesis icons in Chilandari) (2).

1. M. Chatzidakis, Ex τῶν 'Ελπίου τοῦ Ρωμαίου, Epetiris of the Association of Byzantine Studies 14 (1938), 412. (= Studies in Byzantine Art and Archeology, Variorum Reprints, London, 1972, III, 412).
2. A. Xyngopoulos, Thessalonique et la Peinture Macédonienne, Athènes, 1955.

K. Weitzmann-M. Chatzidakis-S. Radojčić, Die Ikonen, Herrsching-Ammersee 1977, p. 165.

64, 65

Saint Nicholas, panel, 30.5 x 20 cm, Ochrid, 13th Century.

Nicholas was Bishop of Myra and in the course of the centuries he has captured many people's imagination. His name is derived from the Greek viky meaning victory and λαος meaning people; combined they mean victor of (or with) the people. A popular hero par excellence, he is much revered in East and West. Reliable historical information about his life is alas not available. There is evidence of his worship in Constantinople and Myra from the 6th century and the cult spread from these two cities to the entire Greek and Russian world. When in 1087, as a result of the war with the Mohammedan Turks, his remains were moved to Bari in Southern Italy, the cult spread through the rest of Europe very quickly. He seems to have been Bishop of Myra in Lycia during the first half of the 4th century, to have attended the Council of Nicaea (325) where he is said to have boxed Arius' ears, to have fought against the heathens, in particular the Artemiscultus, and finally to have worked many miracles. These legends were at a later date combined with the vicissitudes of another Nicholas, abbot of the Sion cloister in Lycia, whose biography is known to us (1). From the 10th century this man has been confused with the Bishop of Myra (2). About the abbot we know that 'directly after his birth he was able to stand up for two hours, thanks to God's will, that he worked numerous miracles and drove out demons', episodes which are also attributed to the Bishop of Myra.

In terms of iconography, the Nicholas portrait is closely related to the Christus Pantocrator portrait. This has a theological background: Nicholas is seen as the counterpart of Christ. On either side of his head we see fragments of his nomen sacrum: (Niko)la(os). He is portrayed to the waist as bishop in full ornate and, although the icon has been damaged, we can see the clothes he is wearing. The sticharion (under robe) and a dark epitrachilion cover the lower torso, while the upper part is covered by the phaelonion and the homophorion which is embroidered with three crosses. The right hand is held up in blessing, in the left, which as a sign of respect is covered by the cuff of the phaelonion, he holds a closed bible.
Particularly impressive is the Saint's face. He is looking to the left while his face, in conformity with antique usage, is turned slightly to the other side. This old canon has generally been observed in Byzantine art while the West broke with this tradition in the late Gothic period. The realistic colours of the face are very beautiful.

This icon was probably painted in Ochrid, where there was an important school of icon painting which reached its peak in the 13th and 14th centuries and was a direct descendant of the Byzantine school. These painters worked in the tradition of Constantinople's Golden Age, which they further developed in the 13th and 14th centuries. In general cultural terms Ochrid was closely related to Constantinople and there were many contacts between the two cities. The old question of whether or not we can speak of a separate Ochrid school must remain unanswered as long as we have no comprehensive view of Macedonian icons. The matter is further complicated by our knowledge that many icons from Constantinople found their way to Ochrid and it is against this historical backdrop that we must regard our St. Nicholas icon.

1. G. Anrich, Hagios Nikoloas. Der heilige Nikolaos in der griechischen Kirche, Bd. I, 3-55.
2. L. Heiser, Nikolaus von Myra, Heiliger der ungeteilten Christenheit, Trier 1978, 29 ff.
3. O. Bihalji-Merin, Byzantine Frescoes and Icons in Yugoslavia, London 1960, 13.

66, 67

Saint Theodore the Tyran, panel, 45 x 34 cm, without the additional frame 40 x 23 cm, Macedonian, early 15th century

The painting with its original canvas has been transferred onto a new board. The right shoulder and hand are missing, the left arm is damaged. The ground – not golden – is damaged and as a result the inscriptions have disappeared. The icon, pendant to the icon of Saint Theodore the Stratelates, shows Theodore the see p. 68, 69 Tyron, who suffered martyrdom about 300 A.D. The saint, in half length, holds a spear in the right hand and a shield in the left. The greenish gray cuirass made of leather and metal is like that in the pendant icon. A red mantle is bound with a knot below the left shoulder. The head with the long beard and the hair over the ears are characteristic features of the type of Saint Theodore the Tyron (1). The modelling of the face with the limited lighted areas, the warm coloured shadow and the red reflection on the edge of the nose and the lips and also its melancholic and dreamy mood date the icon to the last phase of good Palaeologan art. The elaborate ornamentation of the cuirass also points to the same period (2). The absence of gold indicates a probable origin in West Macedonia.

1. A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus,'Η ἑρμηνεία... p. 157.
2. ΧΙΛΑΝΔΑΡ, (D. Bogdanović-B. Djurić-D. Medaković), Beograd, 1978, fig. 77 (St. Theodore).

68, 69

Saint Theodore the Stratelates, panel, 44.5 x 34 cm, without the additional frame 38 x 28 cm, Macedonian, early 15th century

The painting with its original canvas has been transferred onto a new board. The left shoulder and hand are missing, while the right elbow is damaged. The ground – not golden – is damaged and thus all the inscriptions have been lost. Saint Theodore the Stratelates who suffered martyrdom during the reign of Maxentius is represented in half length raising with the right hand his bare sword in front of the right shoulder. His greenish-grey leather cuirass with the white flora motives has a metallic reinforcement. His shoulders are covered with a deep purple mantle. The head with the curly hair and the beard (1) parted in the middle to form two locks indicate the saint Theodore the Stratelates.

The modelling of the face with the limited lighted surfaces, the warm coloured shadow and the red reflections on the edge of the nose and lips as well as the melancholic and dreamy expression relate to the last phase of good Palaeologan painting. The ornaments of the cuirass, elaborate as they are, confirm dating to the same period (2).

1. A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, Διονυσίου τοῦ ἐκ Φουρνᾶ, Ἡ ἑρμηνεία τῆς ζωγραφικῆς τέχνης, Petrograd 1909, p. 157.
2. ΧΙΛΑΝΔΑΡ, (D. Bogdanović-B. Djurić-D. Medaković), Beograd, 1978, fig. 77 (St. Theodore).

70,71

Saint Procopius, panel, 110 x 74.5 cm, Macedonian, 14th century

Ancient historians are divided on the subject of the life of Procopius. According to some writers he was the first victim of the Diocletian terror; it seems he was tortured to death in Palestine in 303. During his life he had many functions in the Church: he was reader, translated the bible into Syrian, was exorcist and apologist (i.e. he defended the doctrines and morals of 2nd and 3rd century Christianity against the heathens). After his arrest he was brought to Caesarea, where the pro-Roman governor ordered him to sacrifice to the heathen gods and to obey the four emperors Diocletian, Galerius, Maximian and Constantius I. This he refused and he was beheaded. Other writers, however, believe that Procopius was a converted Roman officer. This opinion gradually gained ground in the Orthodox East and generally we see Procopius portrayed as a soldier saint, as is the case here.

Portrayed frontally, he makes a striking impression. Originally this impression must have been even more striking, but unfortunately the lower part of the icon has been destroyed. Procopius is shown here as a young man with an attractive figure. It remains an interesting question why the Byzantine soldier saints show such an androgynous quality. For the same is true of George and Demetrios plus many others, all with feminine faces.

Around the head of the warrior is a large red halo. In his right hand Procopius holds a sword, the blade of which is given extra definition by a white outline. With his other hand he holds the sheath, while his left arm bears a shield which is also held by a cord over his right shoulder. The shield originally reached almost to the ground. His clothing consists of armour plus a chlamys, a mantle which is knotted at his right shoulder. This icon can be considered as one of the major icons produced by the Macedonian school in the 14th century. Characteristic for this school is the powerful play of complementary colours. Vermilion contrasts with green. The eyebrows, too, plus the penetrating glance and the decorative elements in the armour are all typical of the Macedonian school in the 14th century.
The face of Procopius shows considerable resemblance to two famous icons from the Lavra cloister on Mount Athos. One is an icon of Saint Panteleimon (1) from the 12th century, the other is of Saint George (2) from the 14th century.

1. K. Weitzmann e.a., Vroege Ikonen, Sinaï, Griekenland, Bulgarije, Joegoslavië, The Hague, fig. 42.
2. ibid., fig. 61.

72, 73

Saint John the Baptist, Tempera on wood, 41 x 31 cm, Byzantine, School of Constantinople, third quarter of the 14th century

St. John the Baptist, known as St. John Prodromos, the Forerunner, is shown frontally in half length. He is dressed not in the melote, the garment of penitence (cf. Mt: 3,4) but in a tunica exomis which turning around the waist falls over the left shoulder and covers his side and arm, leaving most of the torso naked. With his right, emaciated hand, lifted in front of the naked, strong chest, he makes a gesture of blessing or speaking, while in his left he holds a thin, wooden staff, surmounted by a double cross. His hair is shaggy, the locks taking the form of a wild bush or desert thorns, pictorially suggesting the force of the desert's dry wind. The beard, thin on the cheeks, growing heavier around the chin, hanging in snake-like forms, supplements the impression of an inner excitement conveyed by the hair. It forms a contrast to the austere face whose expression is not that of a peaceful contemplation of the world beyond. It is an expression of concern, almost of an inner torture, characteristic of Palaeologan art.

From the point of view of iconography this portrayal of the Saint is not unknown in Byzantine art (1). His depiction in the tunica exomis reflects an old iconographic tradition followed in some representations of Christ's Baptism. Among the earliest examples one could mention early Christian sarcophagi and mosaics, like those in the Orthodox Baptistery in Ravenna (2). Occasionally this element can be seen in Byzantine manuscripts while the partial nakedness is found on icons (3). However, the stylistic rendering of the representation is more significant. The dark brown, warm flesh tones, part of a limited colour palette which characterizes this icon, paints the image of a weather-beaten and sun-burnt face and body, and depicts John as the man of the desert, the ascetic and preacher of penitence (Mt: 3,2). The application, however, of large areas of strong highlights, around the eyes and on the body, while it helps the creation of modelling, intensifies the contrasts in the rendering and introduces a metaphysical quality in the representation. The contrasts are further pursued in the composition itself. The linear, flat treatment of the tunic, with a vertical rhythm most predominant – the verticality is stressed by the upright, left hand and the staff, set parallel to the picture-frame – contrasts the curves and diagonals forming anatomical details on the naked torso. At the same time the strong luminosity around the eyes and on the torso contrasts the shimmering sunlight captured by the wild hair.

The application of the highlights, thick lines applied in a consistent circular movement, a freedom of the brush strokes in the rendering of the hair, the modelling of the torso, recall icons of the Constantinopolitan

school, which can be safely assigned to the second half and more precisely the third quarter of the 14th century, such as the magnificent diptych of the Virgin and Christ of Pity in the monastery of the Transfiguration at Meteora (4). A similar date and provenance must be assigned to this icon which is an excellent example of the work carried out under the Palaeologan dynasty after the middle of the 14th century.

1. For the iconography of St. John the Baptist see: E. Sdrakas, Johannes in der Kunst der christlichen Ostens, Munich 1943.
2. W.F. Volbach, Frühchristliche Kunst, Munich 1958, pls. 5, 141.
3. G. and M. Sotiriou, Icônes du Mont Sinai, Athens 1956, 1958, 2, pls. 86, 212.
In the first example, the Comnenian icon, John wears the melote but in the manner of a tunica exomis; while in the Palaeologan icon he wears the tunic and the melote both, however, covering his ascetic body in half.
4. K. Weitzmann, M. Chatzidakis, S. Radojčić, Die Ikonen, Herrsching-Ammersee 1977, p.78, with figures and earlier references.

See also: Important Icons from Private Collections, Museum Het Prinsenhof, Delft, Holland, cat. no. 53.

74, 75

Saint John the Theologian, panel, 103 x 67 cm, Constantinople, early 15th century

With the tops of his fingers this evangelist holds the bible slightly open so that we can read the words with which his gospel begins:
'Ε(ν ἀρχη ἠν ὁ λόγος, καὶ ὁ) λό(γος ἠν πρὸς τὸν) θε(όν, καὶ θεὸς) ἠν (ὁ λόγος). οὑτ(ος ἠν ἐν ἀρχη πρὸς τὸν) θε(ον). πά(ντα δι' αὑτου ἐγέτο....)
(In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God).
The saint presents himself using inscriptions. In the left and right hand corners we can read ' ὁ ἅ(γιος Ιω (άννμς) ' and above his right shoulder ' ὁ θεολόγος ', Saint John, the Theologian.
The evangelist John is identified with the apostle of the same name (John 21 : 24). From this disciple we know that Jesus loved him (John 13 : 23; 19 : 26; 20 : 2; 21 : 7, 20). In the Last Supper we always see him seated next to Jesus and during the crucification Christ instructs him to take care of Christ's mother (John 19 : 26-27).

St. John was probably born on the shores of the Sea of Galilee and was a fisherman (Mark 1 : 19-20) when he became a disciple of Jesus. He probably spent his old age on Patmos, where he wrote his gospel. If he in fact did write his gospel together with the three epistles has not been definitely established and one repeatedly hears references to the 'problem of John'.
Orthodox art always shows John as old in contrast to Western art which always portrays him as youthful. The manual which Dionysios of Foerna wrote for icon painters describes John accordingly (cap. 150 (1): 'John the Divine, an old man, bald, with a long sparse beard, holding a gospel'. And so was he portrayed by Byzantine painters. The face of a man full of inner tumult gazes at us motionless. The face is finely chiselled with soft lines. A high forehead, puckered eyebrows and a long, unusual nose characterize the old philosopher. Beautiful is the grey, curly beard around the lined face. Cautiously the evangelist opens the book a little, as though he wants to arouse our curiosity about its contents. While the content is in fact so familiar to the believer that just a couple of phrases are sufficient for him to recall the entire text (see above).

The icon is in the style of the late Byzantine period. Typical of this period are the semi-realistic features of the face which give such a distressed impression. There is a whole series of these impressive portraits from the parecclision of the Kariye Camii in Istanbul (2). The apostles from the same collection, witnesses of the Last Judgement, indicate the beginning of a new style period. The beauty of this St. John icon can certainly compete with theirs. Characteristic of the late Byzantine period is the treatment of clothing and faces. The face is very expressive and is painted with great care; the contrast with clothing is all the greater, for here the painter employs coarse folds, abstracted to a play with lines, giving the impression that clothes are far less important. Throughout late Byzantine art this trend is discernible. The folds in robes are as if frozen, reduced to an abstract pattern, as though stencilled (cf. under garment in particular). Almost against one's will one is forced to consider work in a studio: the master paints the spiritually ennobled portrait, the pupils may fill in the characterless robe.

1. P. Hetherington, The 'Painter's Manual' of Dionysios of Fourna, Isleworth, Middlesex, 1074, 52.
2. Cf. P.A. Underwood, The Kariye Djami, Vol. 3, The Frescoes, New York 1966, fig. p. 376.

76

Twelve Feasts, panel, 28 x 38 cm, Ochrid, 15th century

This brilliant small panel depicts the twelve major feasts of the Church. The scenes shown are:

1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12

1. Annunciation
2. Nativity
3. Presentation to the Temple
4. Baptism
5. Transfiguration
6. Raising of Lazarus
7. Entry into Jerusalem
8. Crucifixion
9. Resurrection
10. Ascension
11. Pentecost
12. Dormition of the Virgin

Iconographic form of the twelve feasts was first seen in the illuminated manuscripts of the early gospels. Later the first icons of the twelve feasts were found in the Monastery of St. Catherine in Sinia.

The panel is an astonishingly moving work and marks out its painter as a man of exceptional skills, who was able to produce a version of an old term which was not only an iconographical replica, but also a very personal painting with all the feeling of a true South-Slav.

All the scenes are conceived in an unusually dramatic and life-like manner. The painter by no means departs from the canon of iconography, while at the same time he is completely free of stiffness and conventionality that so soon overtakes Byzantine painting after the end of the 15th century. Particularly noteworthy in this respect is the twisting reluctance of the Christ Child in (3) Presentation to the Temple.

The glittering high-key colouring is typical of the 15th century. When at certain angles to the light, the gold ground takes on an intense life of its own, the figures and scenes become sharply silhouetted against the light, that appears to come from the back of the picture. The Life of Christ is shown to us against the background of the infinite universe filled with light.

See also: Important Icons from Private Collections, Museum Het Prinsenhof, Delft, Holland, cat. no. 42.

77

The Annunciation, panel, 34 x 22 cm, Ochrid, second half of the 15th century

This small delicately carved and gilded panel is separated into two registers. The top shows the Annunciation. The scene depicted against an elaborate architectura background shows the Archangel Gabriel descending upon the Virgin, who stands by a podium in the Temple. She stops spinning and holds the skein of wool in her left hand and the right is raised in a gesture of astonishment while she listens to the angel's message.
The lower register shows the warrior saints, St. George and St. Demitrios on horse-back. St. George, wearing the red cloak, symbolizing martyrdom and a warrior's tunic, is armoured with a lance. Galloping his prancing white stallion he steers the lance in a mortal thrust into the dragon's head. St. Demitrios is portrayed on a red horse killing the infidel.

In considering the character of Macedonian painting, one factor must be observed – the contribution of the Slavonic element. Although the Macedonian region was closely dependent on Constantinople, its ethnic complexion was more Slav than Greek. Naturally with the fall of Constantinople, the nations became aware of themselves as separate entities and this awareness was reflected in their art.
The Slavonic element predominated, reformulating the Byzantine aesthetics to provide a basis for a new 'national' style. A more forceful use of line invests the images with a new sense of vitality, drama and emotion, which is predominate in the South-Slav character.

See also: Important Icons from Private Collections, Museum Het Prinsenhof, Delft, Holland, cat. no. 29.

78

Simeon the Bearer of God, panel, 33.5 x 28.5 cm, Russian, late 15th century

This icon is based on Luke 2 : 25-32: 'And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him. And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law. Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, 'Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word:
For mine eyes have seen thy salvation,
Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people;
A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.'

Icon painters have portrayed these words. Since the 15th century Simeon has been represented tenderly holding the infant Christ in his arms, which is why Orthodox believers refer to him as 'the bearer of God'.

The old Simeon is portrayed here in bust. The upper body is turned to the right which adds life to the composition. The dark robe is draped in broad folds. Here and there the painter has used highlights to enliven the composition. The gold striped garment of the infant is very finely painted. With benevolent earnestness Simeon bows his head over the child which is turned slightly away from him. Both figures are portrayed with deep feeling for human emotions. Simeon has waited his whole long life for this moment when he can hold the saviour of Israel in his arms. He looks at the child and utters the prophecy (Luke 2:34-35): 'And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother: Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel: and for a sign which shall be spoken against;
(Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.'
It is as though the child is shocked by this 'prophecy of doom'. It turns away and almost seems to try to escape from his arms (a similar reaction can be seen in the icons of the Passion Madonna; only there the anxious child seeks protection from his mother). In his hands Christ holds the closed scroll.

From the 15th century the expression of human emotions entered into icon art. For the first time human feelings were explored, the icy cold of earlier works being abandoned in favour of intimate warmth. The affection between people, as shown here between Simeon and Christ, receives new attention. The new cultural values bring an end to the epoch in which love was regarded as unassailable. The human being has become aware of his own inner life and consequently concentrates on a more tender and palpable love. For the art of the icon this change of attitude to love also brings with it changes in the iconographic programme.

New themes are created to fit the changed situation, and the Simeon icon is proof of this.

79

The Archangel Michael, panel, 21 x 17 cm, Asia Minor, 15th century

Caption: ὁ ἀρ(χαγγελος) Μιχ(α)η(λ), Archangel Michael, or possibly, ὁ ἀ̣ρ(χων) Μιχ(α)η(λ), Strategist Michael.
Though the icon is damaged, the essential elements portrayed can still be recognized. The Archangel Michael is shown as a warrior. He is wearing armour and a red chlamys, standard items for a soldier. In his right hand he holds a pointed sword; its blade is outlined in white to indicate its sharpness. In his left hand the angel holds the sheath of the sword. His head, surrounded by a golden halo, shows a friendly disposition. Amongst his curls we see a white diadem, held in place by white ribbons.
The angel shows signs of extreme formalization. He is not part of space but separate from it, in isolation, as if in search of contact with the observer. The formalization which played such an important role in hieratic Byzantine art reduces the angel to a figure. The painter achieves this by negating depth, resulting in two dimensionality, frontality, in other words, a simplification of form. The icon painter could be described as a spiritual romantic. His aesthetic ideals – the simplification of form in order to achieve a more spiritual portrayal – indicate a flight from the earthly. He uses every possible medium to illustrate the intense fundamentality of celestial life. This can be seen in the face of the Archangel; nose and eyes are emphasized. The striking highlights undermine the human forms, weaken the real aspects but accentuate the spiritual character of the figure.

In the cities along the Turkish coast Greek merchants collected to trade with the Turks. They lived together in colonies, kept their old religion and practised the art of icon painting. In the period around 1500, when this icon was made, the cultural ties with Greece are still discernable. Unfortunately, few icons from Asia Minor are available, and attacks by the Turks in later periods may be the reason for this.

80

The Ascent of Elijah, Byzantine fresco, 170 x 140 cm, Libanon or Syria, 15th century

The Greek inscription reads: καὶ ἰδοὺ ἅρμα πυρὸς καὶ ἵπποι πυρὸς. καὶ ἀνελήφθη Ἠλιας ἐν συσσεισμῷ ὡς εἰς τον οὐρανον.
This text has been taken from 2 Kings 2 : 11: 'Behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire . . . and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven'. No other prophet from the Old Testament has been portrayed so often as Elijah. The reason for this is undoubtedly that Elijah was seen as a precursor of Christ, as even the early Christian church fathers pointed out. Elijah's ascension in particular was regarded as a reference to the ascension of Christ (1).
Elijah, which means 'My God is Jehovah' lived in the ninth century B.C. in the reign of King Ahab. His whole life was devoted to the struggle against the worship of Baal. Ahab's wife, Jezebel, had brought this cult with her from her native country, the land of the Zidonians. Elijah was the only of the prophets who remained loyal to God and single-handed he took on the prophets of Baal, challenging them to perform miracles and, when they failed, killing them (1 Kings 18 : 20-40).
The ascension of Elijah is without any doubt the most portrayed event from his life. It is described in 2 Kings (2 : 11-14): 'And it came to pass, as they (Elijah and Elisha) still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. And Elisha saw it, and he cried, My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horseman thereof. And he saw him no more: and he took hold of his own clothes, and rent them in two pieces. He took up also the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and went back, and stood by the bank of the Jordan; And he took the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and smote the waters, and said, Where is the Lord God of Elijah? and when he also had smitten the waters, they parted hither and thither: and Elisha went over.'

In a chariot of fire, pulled by four horse of fire, Elijah rushes towards heaven. The artist has found a superb manner to indicate this upwards motion. By placing two of the horses before the chariot and the other two behind it, all suggestion of movement forwards is avoided and it seems as though the strength of the horses results in vertical movement. Elijah gives his shabby mantle to Elisha, his pupil, who thanks to his bald head looks like an old man.
Elisha is portrayed twice in the lower half of the icon. Once he reaches with both hands towards Elijah's mantle, the other time he is standing in the Jordan with his robe pulled up. It is an indication of the moment after Elijah's ascent for he is still holding the rolled up mantle of his teacher.
The landscape is barren and empty. Monotonous colours dominate. The hill tops are terraced, at a lower level the terrain is rolling. Noteworthy here is the height of the hill tops; to the left they are higher. This is because the painter has allowed for the movement pattern most of us are not aware of. Our eyes go from left to right, from top to bottom. The painter has portrayed the Jordan with this in mind. To accentuate the movement, the rolling line of the horizon is more or less parellel to the river, the waters of which are in nearly the same colour as the land. Grey stripes indicate large waves in the river.

The fresco originated in Syria or Libanon, but probably Syria, where a group of Orthodox Christians lived, the Melchites or 'Imperialists' from the Greek Melchites, which in turn is derived from the Syriac melek, King. They supported the Council of Chalcedon (451) where the doctrine that Christ combined divine and human properties was approved. Though the Emperors in Byzantium were generally supporters of the monophysite heresy, the Melchites were nevertheless always loyal to them. The group formed a minority and concisted mainly of Greek colonists and hellenized Syrians. Because of their pro-Byzantine attitude they suffered much under Islam.
The possibility that this fresco is from a Melchite church is supported by the Greek inscription. The other

Christians in this area, the Maronites, were more orientated to Rome, particularly after 1181 when a formal unification with Rome took place, and their inscriptions were generally in Syriac of Latin. The style of the painting suggests that it dates from the 15th century. However, as we have virtually no other works to compare it with and we do not even know from which church it comes, we cannot be sure of this.

Greek Icons and Related Works of Art

85

The Forty Martyrs of Sevastos, panel, 43 x 30.5 cm, Greek, circa 1500

The martyrs are depicted huddled together in a group against the background of the frozen green lake, their loin-cloths of delicate tones of blue, green and a violet-pink. Above, the Saviour appears in an elaborate geometric mandorla and spreads his hands in blessing. Below his outstretched hands are 39 martyrs' crowns studded with pearls. On the right of the group is the three-tiered domed building of the bath house into which the renegade centurion disappears while slightly to the left, the Roman guard slips off his red shirt prior to taking his place in the frozen lake.

The forty martyrs were Christian soldiers who suffered death in 320, under Emperior Licinius in Sevastos (Armenia). They were forced to stand naked in a frozen lake. Only if they would renounce Christ, might they leave the lake and enter an adjacent heated bath house. Only one out of the forty was to take advantage of this escape from death, but on the threshold of the bath house, he dropped dead. At 3 o'clock in the morning 39 crowns appeared in the sky, and a light from heaven warmed the frozen water of the lake. A guard, called St. Candidus by Dionysius of Fourna, impressed by the courage (and perhaps, also by the divine portents) left his post to join them. On the following day the tormentors found that the forty had still not expired. They were done to death – their legs being broken with hammers.

The earliest picture of this scene is found in an eighth-century fresco in Santa Maria Antiqua, in Rome. The cycle in Ochrid, Yugoslavia, has, in addition, the decapitation of the survivors of the lake. The Theodore psalter, made in Constantinople in 1066, has an interesting interpretation. The executioners, who throw stones, are themselves injured, and blood pours from their heads. The dogmatic significance of forty is that the number had been sanctified by Jesus's fast of forty days in the desert.

86, 87

A Double-Sided Icon, painter Longin (unsigned), 44 x 29 cm, Serbian, second half of the 16th century
The Raising of Lazarus (page 86)
Christ's Entry into Jerusalem (page 87)

Longin, a monk of Pec and a poet, is considered to rank among the greatest Serbian painters. Active between 1566-1598, his icons are preserved at Pec, Decani, Lomnica, Piva, Velika Hocu, in the village of Cikota in Bosnia, and at Nikoljac near Bijelo Polje. Distinct from the somewhat rigid style of contemporary Cretan painting, Longin was a leading exponent among those Serbian artists who turned for inspiration to the rich treasure house of early 14th century Byzantine painting. He also appears to have been acquainted with both Islamic and Russian art. Longin's pleasure in his art is evidenced by these lines written by him 'Rejoice Stephen, first martyr, and you Nicholas! for by providence, and through your aid I have been enabled to paint images of the saints to the best of my skill. Rejoice! my gracious protectors, for by my hand your likenesses as pastors of the Church have been fashioned and your miracles re-enacted!' (1).

It would appear that double-sided icons such as this one here illustrated were intended to be suspended from large lanterns.
One side represents Christ raising Lazarus from his Tomb (John XI, 1-46) with Martha and Mary prostrating before the Saviour, who with a majestic gesture of command ('Lazarus come forth') extends his right hand in the direction of the dead man; a group of Apostles, including Peter and John, stand behind Christ. A youth holds his sleeve over his mouth and nose while untying Lazarus's grave-clothes. In the background between the schematically executed mountains, figures emerge from the gateway of the town of Bethany.
The reverse of the panel depicts Christ's triumphant Entry into Jerusalem (John XII, 1-18) mounted on a donkey, and accompanied by Apostles. The Saviour is welcomed by elders at the city gate, while children throw garments (attributes of an annointed King, 2 Kings 9 : 13) and palm branches before him. A boy watches the spectacle from a tree as he cuts branches off with an axe; palms were a symbol of courage, and given to conquerors.

The raising of Lazarus preceded Christ's entry into Jerusalem, an event which in its turn marks the beginning of the Passion. Thus in the Church calendar the 'great and saving forty days' of Great Lent are brought to an end and remembrance of the two events intermingle in the Church services:
Troparion: 'By raising Lazarus from the dead before your own Passion, you granted a pledge of universal resurrection, Oh Christ our God. Like children bearing branches of victory, we cry 'Oh vanquisher of death, hosanna in the highest, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord'.'
Kondakion: 'Sitting on a throne in heaven, and carried on a foal on earth, Oh Christ our God! accept the praise of angels above, and the songs of children below, who sing 'Blessed is he who comes to recall Adam'.'

See Paul Muller, Icônes Byzantines, Paris 1978, plate XLV, for another double-sided icon by Longin from the same series in the Monastery of Decani (Kosovo), Yugoslavia, representing the festivals of the Annunciation and the Nativity. See also L'Art en Yougoslavie de la Prehistoire a Nos Jours, Grand Palais, Paris, March 1971, exhibition catalogue no. 306 for another double-sided icon by the same artist, representing St. Theodosios, and St. Savva. Also, V. Djurić, Icônes de Yougoslavie, XII Congrès Inter-

national des Etudes Byzantines, Ochride, 1961, plates XCIII-XCVI for a large panel from the iconostasis of the monastery of Lomnica, signed in Slavonic 'Painted by the sinful servant of Christ, Longin' (1577). See also David Talbot Rice, Icons and Their Dating, London, 1974, plates 36A and B for a similar double-sided icon of the same subject presumed to be by a follower of Longin and dated circa 1630.

1. See V. Djurić, op. cit.
An extensive literature on Longin exists in Serbian.

88

The Archangel Michael, panel, 84 x 50 cm, Macedonian, about 1500

The Greek captions read: ὁ ἀρχαγγελος Μιχαηλ and, directly above the wings: ὁ φυλαξ, which means 'The Archangel Michael, the guardian'. The Archangel Michael, whose name means 'Who is as God?' is the first among the angels and also their leader (ἀρχων). According to Daniel (10 : 13, 21 and 12 : 1) he protects Israel. The Church believes that God has instructed Michael to protect every country and every people. Worship of him as the protector of Christians began to develop in the 4th century, and since then many churches have been consecrated to him in the Orthodox East. In Constantinople alone there were more than twenty.

Michael is portrayed from the front, in conformity with the canons of Orthodox art. To portray a figure thus is a phenomenon which above all features in religious works. The frontal position possesses an autonomous expressivity; there is a suggestion of tension, of a uniting force, emphasized by the lack of motion; it lies beyond the realm of strictly formal aesthetics (1). This tension results in a unity between onlooker and portrayed, isolating them totally from the world around them. The artistic purpose of this is to express superhuman greatness, unconditional authority and mystic inaccessibility. The efforts to portray personalities who compel respect and authority in an impressive manner reached a very high level in Orthodox art. The Archangel is depicted to the waist. In his right hand he holds his sword heroically with a firm grip of the handle. A red cord also connects the sword to his wrist. Unusually finely wrought is his coat of mail. Over the armour he wears a red mantle with decorated gold edging. In his left hand he holds the discus with the portrait of Christ Emmanuel, a sign that Michael fights for him. The angel's face shows rather feminine features. It is in fact a familiar feature of Christian art to portray Michael and the other angels as androgynous creatures. The head band which intermingles with his curls also emphasizes his femininity.

This icon is a product of the Macedonian school, which by the 16th century had almost ceased to exist. The area had been in Turkish hands since 1423, but of great significance for the icon painters was that the Turks intervened mainly in political and economic affairs, and generally kept away from religious life. Thus the cloisters were responsible for Christian art and culture. This had enormous influence on the art of the icon. Now that the private patrons of art were no longer present, the ideals of that art changed. The cloisters formed closed communities which, in general, were more faithful to old ideas than the ordinary world which was more open to changes in fashion and to the acceptance of new ideas. Thus the monks were not attempting something new but remained faithful to the old tradition, at the same time making sure that the quality was at the desired level. It seems very probable that this Michael icon was produced in one of the cloister studios with the ideals described above.

89

Three Saints, panel, 35 x 28.5 cm, Greek, 15th century

Wood with slightly raised carved border. The painting on the border is flaked and bears dense cracks. Saint Paraskevi holding an icon of the Man of Sorrow, is represented in the middle flanked by a military saint, Saint George and an hierarch, Saint Nicolas. All three are depicted in full length and frontally.
The heads are almost of the same height, but the saints at the sides have thinner torsos. This irregularity attributes to the painting a certain character of unskillfulness, which also occurs in the drawing of Saint George's feet.

Saint Paraskevi by holding the icon of the Man of Sorrow honored in the Orthodox Church on the Ash-Friday, stands here as an allegorical representation of this day (1). The facility of painting this miniature figure of Christ naked and with the hands crossed is remarkable and characterises also the monochrome mask on the green shield of Saint George.
The modelling of the faces is soft but strong with the flesh coloured in warm tones, modes that point to Byzantine 15th century painting, and harmonizes with the smooth drapery where it is preserved – and with the ease in the loose, relaxed pose of Saint George (2). The choice and arrangement of colour is marked by a certain sophistication. The dominating brown of Saint Paraskevi's maphorion with its black folds is flanked by the cinnabar red of Saint George's chlamys and Saint Nicolas' phaelonion.
The very ground of the icon has been painted not with gold but with brownish olive green. The employment of sole colour instead of gold indicates that the place of origin could be West Macedonia.

1. A. Papageorgiou, Masterpieces of the Byzantine art of Cyprus, Nicosia 1965, pl. 45,2.
2. K. Weitzmann - M. Chatzidakis - S. Radojčić, Die Ikonen, Herrsching-Ammersee 1977, fig. 99.

90, 91

Bilateral Bema Door, panel, 120 x 32 cm (each wing), Greek, about 1500
Annunciation (page 90)
Saint John the Baptist and Saint Nicholas (page 91)

The bema door in its original form most probably had a carved crowning and was wider. As it stands today it has been cut around its three sides, besides the lower one, in order to take the format of a double bilateral icon.
A. The Annunciation is inscribed in red capital letters:
Ο ΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΙΣΜΟΣ, Ο ΑΡΧ(ΑΙ ΓΕΛΟΣ)

ΓΑΒΡΙΗΛ, ΜΗ̄Ρ ΘΓῩ

Β. Ο ΑΓ(ΙΟΣ) ΙΩ(ΑΝΝΗΣ) Ο ΠΡΟΔΡΟΜΟΣ Ο ΑΓ(ΙΟΣ) ΝΙΚΟΛΑΟΣ

The scroll of Saint John is written in black majuscules with the text: ΜΕΤΑΝΟΗΤΕ ΗΓΓΙΚΕ ΓΑΡ Η ΒΑΣΥΛΕΙΑ ΤΩΝ ΟΥΡΑΝΩΝ

Annunciation

The iconographic type of the Annunciation as it appears here is the common one used in Cretan icons and murals. The Virgin stands in front of a wooden throne with a red cushion and holds with the left hand the yarn and the spindle while with the right she greets the angel with respect. Next to her is placed a pot with basil and behind her a building with a prostoon and a saddle roof. The angel has arrived at wide steps and raises a hand in a gesture of speech. A tower-like building rises behind him. Below his feet there is a shield that has a black ground and a gold 'lion rampant'. The Annunciation as a decorative theme on bema doors occurs at least since the 11th century and its literary source are hymns in which the Virgin is called Gate of Heavens in relation to the Incarnation (1). The example closest to our icon is found on a bema door in Patmos which for many reasons, both historic and artistic, can be ascribed to the Cretan painter of the 15th century Andreas Ritzos (1451-1494) (2). A comparison of the two works shows that not only the details in drawing the drapery and in the buildings are similar but also that the figures retain the same nobility and grace, qualities inherited from the painting of the Palaeologues. The icon must be the work of a Cretan painter of equal talent to Andreas Ritzos, as is proved by the sensitive touch, the delicacy of the colours, especially those used for the angel, the firm drawing, the modesty in the aristocratic expression of the faces with the small eyes and also by the adjustment of each representation to the narrow format of the panel.

Saint John the Baptist and Saint Nicholas

Saint John the Prodrome in full length, stands frontally and makes with the right hand a gesture of speech while with the left he holds a long cross-staff and an open scroll. Our icon relates to some works in Patmos dated around 1500 (3). The Patmos icon no. 35 shows the face with the passionate expression, the Patmos icon no. 18 the pose and costumes found in our example. The drapery is closer to that in the Patmos icon no. 12 of Saint John the Theologian; the fine white edges of the folds, all straight lines, often form acute angles creating a net of geometric character which is, however, drawn with much delicacy (4). Saint Nicolas, in frontal view, dressed in hieratic vestments holds with the veiled left hand a closed, richly decorated Gospel book and blesses with the right. The head with the large forehead and the small eyes has a vivid expression and shares with the Prodrome the same technical characteristics. The colour of the phaelonion is rosy like the mantle of the Annunciation angel but has shadows deeper in tone. The nimbi of both saints are decorated with an elegant and fine gold rinceaux.

All these traits mentioned so far and also the nobility reflected in the pose, the gestures and the expressions place this bema door among the best icons of the period around 1500. The Western coat of arms indicates that this work was destined for an aristocratic family of Crete rather than Venice. However, we do not know whether the client was Catholic or Orthodox, while it seems certain that the icon must have been painted on Crete (5). The choice of saints John and Nicholas must be related to the names of the donors rather than to the saints to whom the church was dedicated.

Bibliography: Important Icons from Private Collections, exhibited 17th December 1976-15th January 1977, Museum Het Prinsenhof, Delft, Holland, cat. no. 27. Formerly: Tolentino Collection, New York - Elizabeth Seatton College, New York.

1. K. Weitzmann, in Deltion of the Christian Archaeological Society, Athens, 4 (1964-1965) 4 a.f. fig. 3.

M. Chatzidakis, Icons of Patmos, Athens 1979, Nr. 11, pl. 80-81.

3. Ibidem, no. 35, pl. 31 and 96. Comp. also pl. 85.

4. Ibidem, no. 12, pl. 14.

5. S. supra Introduction, cf. M. Chatzidakis, La Peinture des 'Madonneri' ou 'Vénéto-Crétoise' et sa Destination, in Venezia Centro di Mediazone tra Oriente e Occidente (sec. XV-XVI), Vol. 2, Firenze 1977, p. 673 a.f.

92

The Lamentation, panel, 48 x 28.5 cm, Cretan, circa 1600

Beneath the stark outline of the Cross lies the extended body of the Saviour, his head supported against the breast of the Mother of God. Saint John the Divine and Saint Joseph of Arimathea bend over his body. A group of women gather around; one of them, loosening her hair in grief, throws her hands into the air in a rhetorical gesture of lament. In the background a panoramic townscape of Jerusalem is executed in tones of white and grey. This unobtrusive monochrome provides a subtle contrast with the dramatic outline of the Cross and the 'expressionistic' agitation of the figures. A section of about 9 cm is missing from the right-hand side of the panel.

See also the Museum Brochure of the Byzantine Museum in Athens, pl. 17, for a comparable icon attributed to Emmanuel Lombardos. The icon illustrated here has several iconographic elements in common with that of the Benaki Museum, which it appears to predate.

93

The Crucifixion, panel, 45.5 x 32.5 cm, Cretan, late 15th century

In the earliest period the Crucifixion could include that of the two thieves as well as Christ, but following the iconoclastic period this and other scenes were eliminated. Until the late 16th century it was prescribed that the Crucifixion be painted with no more than the three Marys, St. John and Longinus standing at the base of the Cross and only with the single Crucifixion of Christ. During the late 16th and 17th centuries, Western influence encouraged further scenes.

This remarkable painting still bears witness to the quite

extraordinary artistic and spiritual intensity that characterized early 15th century Byzantine art. The delicate and sensitive drawing and the high-key tonality are qualities typical of the style that flowered at the beginning of the century. But the poses and appearance of some of the figures, notably Saint John, shows something of the freedom of Italian art and these characteristics of style, incline us to situate this panel in the Cretan area, which perpetuated during the late 15th century the splendour of the Palaeologue Golden Age.

See also: Important Icons from Private Collections, Museum Het Prinsenhof, Delft, Holland, cat. no. 32.

94

Saint Athanasios, panel, 73 x 50 cm, Greek, second half of the 16th century

The border of the icon is damaged. On the golden ground is inscribed in red capital letters:
Ο ΑΓΙΟΣ.ΑΘΑΝΑΣΙΟΣ ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΕΙΑΣ.
The hierarch Athanasios (3rd century), patriarch of Alexandria, is represented in bust and in frontal position wearing a red phaelonion and gray homophorion. With his left hand, veiled by vestments, he holds a closed Gospel book with a richly embellished cover while he blesses with the right hand. The ground of the nimbus is decorated with a punched motif.
The modelling of the face is extremely hard – the cleaning of the painting resulted in the loss of some intermediary, transitional tones – but the style, distinctively linear, is characteristic of a kind of painting employed in monastic murals of Central Greece during the second half of the 16th century by non-Cretan artists, like the brothers Georghios and Frangos Kontaris from Boeotia (narthex of the Barlaam Monastery, Meteora, 1566) (1) and by other anonymous painters who worked in the Hosios Meletios Monastery and elsewhere (2). These painters, who are excellent craftsmen, have as models icons of Cretan painters of the 16th century but they also manage to add to their works a strong expressionism which clearly distinguishes their creations from the classicism of the Cretan artists. The irregular format of the panel as well as the mediocre craftsmanship of the reverse of the worm eaten wood also seem to suggest that the icon is from a workshop in Central Greece.

Bibliography: Important Icons from Private Collections, 17th December 1976-15th January 1977, Museum Het Prinsenhof, Delft, Holland, cat. no. 66.

1. A. Xyngopoulos, Σχεδίασμα, p. 114 f., pl. 29.
2. H. Deliyanni-Doris, Die Wandmalereien der Lite der Klosterkirche von Hosios Meletios, München 1975.

95

Saint George killing the Dragon, painter Georghios Kortezas, panel, 29.5 x 24 cm, Greek, first half of the 17th century

There is minor damage to the painting. A long crack running from top to bottom on the right has been restored. On the golden ground is written in red capital letters: Ο ΑΓ(ΙΟΣ) ΓΕΩΡΓΙΟΣ but traces of the original inscription Ο ΑΓΙΟΣ indicate that this is posterior. On the lower left is preserved part of the painter's signature written in black capital letters and related to the posterior inscription: (ΧΕΙΡ ΓΕΩΡΓΙΟΥ) ΚΟΡΤΕΖΑ.
The saint on horseback towards the right thrusts with his raised hand the spear into the open mouth of the black dragon who, placed parallel to the horse, winds his tail around the back legs of the animal. The youthful saint wears a reddish cuirass and a red chlamys that flows to the rear. The representation follows the type which must have been created in Crete by the 15th century painters and of which the earliest known example almost certainly is the icon in the Hellenic Institute of Venice (no. 19) (1).

For the horse and dragon especially the model used must derive from a Saint George icon in Bologna (2) painted by Paolo Veneziano, which in its turn is considered to have as a direct or indirect model the ancient bronze horses of Saint Marc (3). This new type became very popular because it survived in many copies until the late 17th century (see also the icons of Saint George killing the Dragon, on the next pages). see p. 96, 97
Georghios Kortezas is a painter known from very few icons (4). According to more recent research in the Cretan Archives of Venice (5), he was active in Herakleion during the first decades of the 17th century.

Bibliography: M. Lazović, Icônes d'une Collection Privée, Musée d'Art et d'Histoire, Genève, 1974, Cat. no. 38.

1. M. Chatzidakis, Icônes de Saint-Georges des Grècs et de la Collection de l'Institut Hellénique de Venise, Venice 1962, p. 119, no. 100, pl. 58. I now date this picture in the end of 15th century, s. Same title, Album, Venice 1975, p. XVII, pl. 58, no. 100.
2. Bologna in San Giacomo Maggiore, s. I Cavalli di San Marco, Venice 1977, fig. 110.
3. Ibidem, p. 98.
4. A. Xyngopoulos, Σχεδίασμα, p. 162, pl. 43.
5. Unpublished. Communicated by Mrs. Maria Kazanaki.

96

Saint George killing the Dragon, painter Emmanuel Lambardos, panel, 34 x 27 cm, Greek, 1620-1640

On the golden ground is inscribed in red capital letters: ΟΑΓΙΟΣ ΓΕΩΡΓΙΟΣ. In the lower golden border is preserved part of the painter's signature written in red capital letters (ΧΕΙΡ ΕΜΜΑΝΟΥΗΛ) ΤΟΥ ΛΑΜΠΑΡΔΟΥ.
The icon repeats the type of the Kortezas icon of Saint George killing the Dragon but it is enriched by see p. 95
the following elements:

a. A child servant with a cap on his head and a towel on his neck with a pitcher in his hand, seated on the rump of the horse. The motif is quite common because it refers to the miraculous intervention of the saint who freed the little slave while he was serving his master wine far away, somewhere in North Africa, and brought him safely back to his mother on the island Lesbos.
b. A miniature princess, who thanks to the saint's

prayer was rescued from the dragon who would have eaten her; that is why she has bound a rope around the dead dragon's neck in order to drag him into the town.

c. A mountainous landscape with a cave, the shelter of the monster, at the lower left.

From every point of view our icon stands very close to the icon in the Hellenic Institute of Venice as can easily be proven by the cuirass with the rich chrysographies and the black chlamys and also by the shield, a part of which appears behind the left shoulder of the saint, although in the icon of Venice the two heroes rescued in the miracles have been omitted (1).

Emmanuel Lambardos, the painter of our icon, must be the younger of the two painters of the same name who worked in Herakleion, Crete (2). Our painter was active during the third and fourth decade of the 17th century. His craftmanship is excellent but he is very conservative and continues to repeat well known, earlier compositions. As more personal characteristics of his work can be considered the muscular structure of the horse and also the passionate expression of the animal's head with the dishevelled, uneasy mane, elements that are undoubtedly influences from contemporary Baroque art.

1. M. Chatzidakis, Icônes de Saint-Georges des Grècs et de la Collection de l'Institut Hellénique de Venise, Venice 1962, p. 119, no. 100, pl. 58. I now date this picture in the end of 15th century; s. Same title, Album, Venice 1975, p. XVII, pl. 58, no. 100.
2. A. Xyngopoulos, Σχεδίασμα, p. 165-169. M. Chatzidakis, ibid., p. 82-85. M. Konstandoudaki, Μαρτυρίες ζωγραφικῶν ἔργων στο Χάνδακα σέ ἔγγραφα τοῦ 16ου καί 17ου αἰ., Thesaurismata 12 (1975) 120.

97

Saint George killing the Dragon, panel, 88 x 64 cm, Greek, 17th century

It is probable that the icon in its original form had a nailed frame. The painting is very well preserved. On the golden ground is inscribed in red capital letters Ο ΑΓΙΟΣ ΓΕΩΡΓΙΟΣ. Our icon, although it repeats the type of the other icons of Saint George killing the
see p. 95, 96 Dragon by Kortezas and Lambardos, is however especially interesting because it presents the translation of the representation of the Cretan icon, which is aristocratic in its class (see also the coat of arms on the wing of the dragon in the Venice icon (1) into a popular or provincial artistic idiom (Central Greece? a Cycladic island?). The disproportions in painting the body of the saint and of the horse and the coarse formation of the cliffs indicate its peripheral origin no matter if the careful and technically successful copy of the details of the chrysographies on the cuirass and the harness as well as the punched nimbus make clear the intention of the painter to create a work in no way inferior to his Cretan model (2).

1. M. Chatzidakis, Icônes de Saint-Georges des Grècs et de la Collection de l'Institut Hellénique de Venise, Venice 1962, p. 119, no. 100, pl. 58. I now date this picture in the end of 15th century; s. Same title, Album, Venice 1975, p. XVII, pl. 58, no. 100.
2. S. parallel case, M. Chatzidakis, Patmos, nr 135, pl. 64.

98

The Virgin Hodegetria, wood with frame in low relief, 86.5 x 64 cm, Greek, 16th century

On the golden lower border is inscribed in cinnabar red cursive letters the following inscription: + δ(έησις τῆς δούλης τοῦ θ(ε)οῦ Εἰρήνης $\overline{\text{αχ}}$ (= μοναχῆς), and on the golden ground in red capital letters ΜΗ̄Ρ ΘῩ (= ΜΗΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΥ) Η ΟΔΗΓΗΤΡΙΑ and ΙΣ̄ ΧΣ̄ (= ΙΗΣΟΥΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ).
In the nimbus of Christ is written Ο ΩΝ .
The Virgin wears a dark red mantle with black folds and Christ a dark green shirt and a cinnabar red mantle with faded chrysographies. The type of this icon showing Christ in a frontal, official pose, holding in one hand a closed scroll, a symbol of the teacher, while with the other hand he makes a gesture of speech or blessing, is repeated in countless icons which honor the miraculous prototype of the icon of the Virgin found in the Constantinopolitan monastery of Hodegon. This archetype, believed to be a work of the evangelist Luke, was transferred from Antiocheia to Constantinople by the empress Eudoxia, wife of Theodosius II (408-450).

The execution of this present icon is masterly. A few white lights close to the nose and eyes have been used in the modelling and by the use of soft shadows the modelling becomes calm. The technique is related to that common in Cretan icons. But the types of physiognomy of the Virgin with the excessively long face and the rather expressionless eyes and of Christ with the small eyes placed close to the nose are not, on the one hand, familiar in Cretan icon painting; and on the other a certain clumsiness in the relation of the two figures point rather to 16th century workshops of northern Greece, where Cretan icons were imitated. The festoons around the nimbus as well as the fine carved frame from one piece of wood, as well as its carpentry as far as the straight lines are concerned, together with the work on its reverse, would seem to justify this attribution.
There is some damage on the left border.

Bibliography: Important Icons from Private Collections, 17th December 1976-15th January 1977, Museum Het Prinsenhof, Delft, Holland, cat. no. 12.

Formerly: Von Spanzenburg Collection, Berlin.

99

Virgin The Fountain of Life, panel, 100 x 65 cm, Greek, first half of the 16th century

This icon is very well preserved. The cleaning of the painting caused damage to the gold ground and to the usual inscriptions, we read traces from ΜΡ [ΘΟΥ] and Η ΖΩΟΔΟ[ΧΟΣ ΠΗΓΗ].
The Virgin, dressed in a wine red maphorion and holding the Child in her hands emerges from a low cylindrical marble font that stands on a conical base. Water falls from two spouts into a square basin. Higher up are depicted two angels in adoration. This symboli-

cal representation refers to the church sited outside the walls of Constantinople famous for the miraculous water of its fountain (1). The literary source of this subject are the texts in which the Virgin is praised as Fountain of Life (2). Not many representations of the scene have survived from the Byzantine period (miniatures and wall paintings) (3). A new type is created after the Fall of Constantinople on 15th century Crete, probably by Andreas Ritzos. Our icon retains all the features of this type. Besides the form of the font and the basin the special characteristic of the type is that the Child Christ is not represented frontally but in a pose borrowed from the type of the Virgin as Madre della Consolazione, in regard to his contraposto movement (4).

To the theme of the Fountain of Life are quite often added complementary figures of persons who were healed in the fountain according to the Synaxarium read in the mass of the day of the feast of the Fountain of Life, that is the Friday of the Easter week (5). This type is employed by 16th century painters, like Antonios on Mount Athos, who must have used a Cretan icon as a model (6) and later the excellent painter Angelos on Crete (about 1600) (7). Our icon, faultless in execution, retains from the type only the main, essential part so that its liturgical character is stressed. All the other elements, the modelling of the faces with the coldly coloured shadows, the absolute geometry of the drapery, the impression created by the simple monumental composition and even the features of the faces testify to an excellent Cretan painter of no later than the mid-16th century, who for this very chronological reason cannot be the painter Angelos. This anonymous painter is, in any case, very conservative and follows faithfully the tradition created by Andreas Ritzos as he repeats even the miniature angels that are painted by the 15th century artist in the representation of the type of the Virgin of Passion (8).

Bibliography: Important Icons from Private Collections, exhibited 17th December 1976-15th January 1977, Museum Het Prinsenhof, Delft, Holland, cat. no. 15.

1. N. Medaković, La Mère de Dieu, Ζωοδόχος Πηγή, dans l'art Serbe, Sbornik Radova 49 (1958). T. Velmans, L'Iconographie de la Fontaine de Vie dans la Tradition Byzantine de la fin du Moyen Age, Synthronon, Paris 1968, p. 8-11.
2. M. Chatzidakis, Περί Σχολῆς Κωνσταντινουπόλεως ὀλίγα, Archaeologikon Deltion 27 (1972) p. 130.
3. See note 1.
4. M. Chatzidakis, Patmos, no. 109, pl. 105, no. 42-43.
5. Ibidem, no. 109, pl. 162 and 204b.
6. M. Chatzidakis, Note sur le peintre Antoine de l'Athos, in Studies in Memory of D. Talbot Rice, Edinburgh 1975, p. 85, 88, pl. 46a-b (= Études sur la Peinture Post-Byzantine, London 1976, VII).
7. Xyngopoulos, Σχεδίασμα ἱστορίας τῆς Θρησκευτικῆς ζωγραφικῆς μετά τήν Ἅλωσιν, Athens 1957, p. 169 ff., pl. 46,2. About the painter Angelos, s. Chatzidakis, Patmos, p. 116.
8. M. Chatzidakis, Les Débuts de l'Ecole Crétoise, pl. 1B,1.

100

Virgin Glykophilousa, wood with low carved frame, 88 x 69 cm, Veneto-Cretan, end of the 15th, beginning of the 16th century

The Virgin in half length holds the Child with both hands. The pose of the Infant derives from two different types: the lower torso and the legs from the Child in the composition with the Virgin of the Passion (see the Virgin of the Passion of Victor) while the upper see p. 101 torso dressed in a dark garment with red shoulderstraps is reminiscent of the representation of Christ Anapeson. Christ in our icon tenderly touches the cheek of his mother and holds with the left hand an open scroll inscribed in black gothic letters with the Latin text EGO SUUM VIA VERITAS. Higher up there are two miniature angels in bust with their hands covered by their reddish garments.

This type of the Virgin and Child is a development from the Byzantine type of the Virgin Eleousa. Its special characteristic, of Italian origin, is that the Child holds in his right hand an open scroll in which is usually quoted a passage from Luke (4 : 18) (1). The text here is different and in Latin but the linguistic mistakes (suum, veritas) indicate that the painter was not Italian.
Indeed, all the characteristics of our icon testify that it was painted in a Cretan workshop of the late 15th or early 16th century. The refined modelling of the faces executed using the palaeologan technique, so that the transition from one tone to another is very subtle, results in a clear description of the masses in a smooth, calm manner and also the special care for given to the formation of the hands with long fingers and precisely indicated joints, are characteristic elements of the best icons of this period (2).
The same also applies to the drapery of the dark purple maphorion of the Virgin that has deep and dark coloured folds and to the garments of Christ with the dense, fine, gold striation.
The nimbi, decorated with a row of palmettes left blank on the striated ground, represent a technique commonly used in these icons (3).

Exactly the same type of Virgin and Child, with only minor iconographic differences as, for example, the colour of Christ's shirt, is repeated in many other icons, two of which are in the Hermitage, one in the Louvre, to mention only a few examples (4). The icon we are dealing with represents an excellent sample of the work of Cretan painters indicative of their production destined for Catholic clientele. It is very well preserved although there is some damage to the border.

Bibliography: Catalogue de la Collection Pisa, Préface de Hugo Ojetti, 1er vol., Milano 1937, p. 11, no. 724.

1. M. Chatzidakis, Les Débuts de l'Ecole Crétoise, in the Volume : Mnimosinon Sophias Antoniadi, Venice 1974, p. 202 (= Etudes sur la Peinture Post-Byzantine, London 1976, Nr. IV).
2. M. Chatzidakis, Patmos, 9, 10, 16, pl. 12, 13, 18 s.ifra note 4.
3. M. Chatzidakis, Les Débuts de l'Ecole Crétoise, p. 199 a.f.; idem, Patmos, pl. 102.

4. Lichačev, Materialij, pl. XXXV and XXXVII, s. Felicetti-Liebenfels, Geschichte der Ikonenmalerei, fig. III - L. Puppi, Inediti di Vittore Prete e Icone Cretesi-Veneziane occhi Note, 'Prospective' 24 (1961) 86, fig. 7. Galerie Nikolenko, Icônes, 1975, Nr 5.

101

The Virgin of Passion, painter Victor, panel, 48 x 38 cm, Greek, second half of the 17th century.

The following is inscribed on the golden ground in cinnabar red letters: Close to the Virgin ΜΗ̄Ρ ΘῩ, above the angels Μ(ΙΧΑΗΛ) and Γ(ΑΒΡΙΗΛ) on the left Η ΑΜΟΛΥΝΤΟΣ and on the right ΙΣ̄ ΧΣ̄ and the text that usually accompanies this representation:

Ο ΤΟ ΧΑΙΡΕ ΠΡΙΝ ΤΗ ΠΑΝΑΓΝΩ ΜΗΝΥΣΑΣ
ΤΑ ΣΥΜΒΟΛΑ ΝΥΝ ΤΟΥ ΠΑΘΟΥΣ ΠΡΟΔΕΙΚΝΥΕΙ
ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ ΔΕ ΘΝΗΤΗΝ ΣΑΡΚΑ ΕΝΔΕΔΥΜΕΝΟΣ
ΠΌΤΜΟΝ ΔΕΔΟΙΚΩΣ ΔΕΙΛΙΑ ΤΑΥΤΑ ΒΛΕΠΩΝ

The painter's signature ΧΕΙΡ ΒΙΚΤΩΡΟΣ is written in the lower margin which is painted gold. The Virgin holds in her left arm the Child Christ who with both hands grasps his mother's right hand. One of his sandals hangs loose from his feet, which are full of motion. Christ turns his head up, towards the archangel who holds the Cross of Passion, while the pendant angel holds the bowl with the vinegar, the lance and the sponge. The movements and gestures of the Child, expressing fear, become symbolic within the calm and monumental compostion.

The representation of the Virgin derives from the Byzantine period and refers to the idea of Incarnation (1), but takes its final form in the second half of the 15th century and in all probability by the Cretan painter Andreas Ritzos (1451-1494) from whom at least three icons with the same subject and bearing his signature are known (2). This type of composition is repeated in many signed and anonymous paintings, because its somewhat idyllic character must have exercised considerable appeal on both Orthodox and Catholic believers.

The well-known and very productive painter Victor, by whom more icons on the same subject are known, worked in Herakleion, Crete in the mid-17th century and according to the results of a recent research in the Cretan Archives of Venice, he was a priest (3). Two more painters resident in Venice and working under the same name are mentioned in Venetian documents of the 16th century, but their work remains unknown (4). Victor, a conservative artist, is an excellent master of the technic of the Cretan icons but he does not take any initiatives in composition and prefers to follow very closely models created by important earlier Cretan painters. Here he uses as models icons of Andreas Ritzos, even repeating details, like the colours and the lowered mantle of Christ. The personal characteristic of his work is a certain coarseness in modelling the faces for which he uses rather hard and densely arranged white lights.

1. M. Chatzidakis, Icônes de Saint-Georges des Grècs et de la Collection de l'Institut Hellénique de Venise, p. 39 ff. M.G. Sotiriou, Παναγία τοῦ Πάθους, βυζαντινή εἰκών τῆς Μονῆς Σινᾶ, in Panegyrikos on the 1400th Memorial of the Monastery of Sinai, Athens 1969, p. κθ'-μβ'.
2. M. Chatzidakis, Les Débuts de l'Ecole Crétoise, p. 178, note 28. M. Cattapan, I pittori Andrea e Nicla Rizo da Candia, Thesaurismata 10 (1973), 238-282.
3. M. Chatzidakis, Patmos, no. 72, note 4.
4. S. Bettini, La pittura di Icone cretese-veneziana e i madonneri, Padova 1933, p. 15, 28-29.

102, 103, 104

Great Deesis, 94.5 x 73 cm (each panel), Cyprus, 16th century

The Cypriot school derived from the Byzantine style of the Paleologue period and was developed fully during the 16th and 17th centuries. The school was closely affiliated to the most celebrated school of painting of the period, the famous Cretan School. Under the tutorage of masters, such as Theophanes, Euphrosynos and Michael Damaskinos, the Cypriot painters, on returning to Cyprus with these new skills and techniques, reproduced the style, adding local features, for the decoration of their many churches and monasteries.

Our three icons have similarities in colour and form, found in the panels of the Great Deesis in the Monastery of Ayios Neophytos. Painted for an iconostasis, these icons are of monumental proportions so as to be viewed by the congregation for contemplation from a distance.
The painter of this group of icons has filled in the background with gold and then incised the outlines of the picture over it, before starting to paint. This is why he often painted over the gold background. The result was that the colours sometimes flaked away at the edges. The painter faithfully follows Byzantine tradition, but he is not impervious to the Italian art of his period. The postures and movements of his figures, as well as their expression, in some cases clearly show an Italian influence. None of the icons is signed or dated.

Christ Pantocrator
Christ is shown from the waist up, against a gold background. He is wearing a dark red chiton and a gold coloured himation. Christ's face has a mild expression and the modelling is rendered, with sharp contrasts between the light and dark surfaces. The highlights are indicated by means of small white brush strokes.

Saint John the Baptist
The Baptist is depicted half-length, turned to the right with hands raised in supplication. He is wearing an olive-green himation with dark stiff folds. The stylistic rendering, especially of the garments, follows the post-Byzantine tradition.

Mother of God
The Virgin is depicted from the waist up, turned to the left with her hands also raised in a gesture of supplication. She wears a dark chiton and a wine red ma-

phorion. The draperies and the interplay of light and shadow on it belong more or less to the Byzantine tradition.

106, 107
The Archangel Michael, painter Michael Damaskinos, signed panel, 104 x 75 cm, Cretan, last quarter of the 16th century

Michael Damaskinos (active circa 1570-1591) is one of the better known and most important Cretan icon painters of the sixteenth century. He was born and lived most of his life in Candia (modern Herakleion), the largest city of Crete and its most vital economic, cultural and artistic centre. Evidence from the notarial archieves of Candia, now located in Venice, has shown that the number of painters of Greek origin active in Candia during the 15th and 16th centuries was well into the hundreds. This evidence suggests that the city had become a school or training ground for Greek painters and painters wishing to paint in the Greek (i.e. Byzantine) manner. Many of these painters could also work in a Western or Latin (i.e. Italianate) style. They produced works for the local Greek and Venetian market and for export to Venice. Venice was a ready market for these devotional images because of the presence of a prosperous Greek colony which, by the fifteenth century, had become one of the largest and most significant groups of foreigners in the city.

It is known that Damaskinos was in Venice during 1577-1582, and he may have been there as early as 1574, for in 1573 the Greek Confraternity had completed the construction of its church, the still extant church of San Giorgio dei Greci, and records indicate that by the next year he was supplying some icons for it. It is also known that by 1584 he had returned to Crete, and that in 1588 the Greek Confraternity tried to convince him to return to Venice to decorate the dome of their church, but that he declined.
While in Venice he decorated part of the sanctuary of San Giorgio and painted the majority of the icons for the iconostasis. The icons consist mainly of scenes from the life of Christ and individual figures of saints and prophets.
One group of these icons exhibit Western stylistic traits of various degrees of intensity. It seems that this trend towards Westernization increased in Damaskinos' work during his Venetian stay. After his return to Crete he continued to paint in this Westernized style, but he also produced icons of a more strictly Byzantine character.

This icon of Saint Michael, holding a sword in his hand and a scroll in his left, because of the decidedly Western treatment of the angel's body, appears to belong to the last decade of Damaskinos' work. It is related to some of the icons he painted for the iconostasis of San Giorgio, as well as to two icons in Corfu painted shortly after his departure from Venice and to a group of icons on the iconostasis of the church of St. Minas in Herakleion painted circa 1584-1591. The elaborate inscription of St. Michael's scroll, which stresses his role as a guardian of the gate of the church, and the large size of the icon suggests that it was painted for the iconostasis of a church.

108
The Decapitation of the Prodrome, by the painter Chalkiopoulos, panel, 34 x 29 cm, Greek, middle of the 16th century

There is damage to the upper left and the lower right corner; the golden ground shows a little damage. The signature of the painter ΧΕΙΡ ΧΑΛΚΗΟΠΟΥΛΟΥ in white capital letters is the only inscription preserved.

The Prodrome is represented kneeling with the hands tightly bound and with a red bleeding wound on his neck. Salome also kneels facing the saint wearing a cinnabar red garment and a crown on her head. She holds a golden bowl under the head of the Prodrome, ready to receive it. Behind St. John stands the executioner, a soldier dressed in a cuirass and a black hat, who raises the sword with the right hand and holds its sheath with the left. On the right is placed a tower-like edifice, the prison, and on the left a distant mountain. The type in regard to these main elements is quite popular among the 16th century Cretan painters as can be proved by its employment in wall paintings in the Catholicon of Lavra (1535) and in the Refectory of the same Monastery (1), in the Catholicon of Dionysiou Monastery (1547) (2) and in the Monasteries of Barlaam (1548) and Metamorphosis (1555) at Meteora.

We have already suggested that this type must have been created on Crete during the 15th century, an hypothesis based on the pose of the executioner, found in 15th century Cretan wall paintings, on the type of costume and decoration of the soldier's cuirass located in works of Cretan painters of the 15th century (N. Tzafouris) and finally on the gothicizing drapery and the shape of Salome's crown (3). The painter of the icon who signs only with his last name can be identified as the artist Maneas Chalkiopoulos (mentioned about 1549-1554) rather than his father Georghios or his younger brother Markos (mentioned in 1554, 1587). This family of artists lived and worked in Herakleion, Crete in the 16th century, as can be concluded from the information in the documents of the Cretan Archives of Venice. The painter Athanasios Chalkiopoulos of the late 15th century (4) is probably an ancestor of this family.

Our painter, on the basis of this sole known work of his, can be considered as a very good craftsman of the Cretan technic who follows types of representations already established in his time but with a certain naiveness in the conception and rendering of the proportions of the figures he paints. There are a few more compositions in icons with the same subject known from approximately the same period: one, a portable icon, in the Dionysiou Monastery (5) and another in Jannina painted on the border of a Prodrome icon signed by Markos Vathas, a Cretan painter who worked in Venice († 1578) (6).

Bibliography: Les Icônes dans les Collections Suisses, Genève, 14 Juin-29 Septembre 1968, cat. no. 23. See also the Introduction by M. Chatzidakis.
Formerly: Collection Boris Schapowalow, Basel, Switzerland.

1. G. Millet, Athos, Les Peintures, Paris 1927, pl. 130,3 143,2.
2. Ibidem, pl. 205,1.
3. M. Chatzidakis, Les Débuts de l'Ecole Crétoise, p. 204 f., pl. $\Lambda\Gamma_1$.
4. M. Constandoudaki, Οἱ ζωγράφοι τοῦ Χάνδακος κατά τό πρῶτον ἥμισυ τοῦ 16ου αἰῶνος οἱ μαρτυρούμενοι ἐκ τῶν νοταριακῶν ἀρχείων, Thesaurismata 10 (1973) 356, Nr. 88. Cf. Same author, Νέα ἔγγραφα γιά ζωγράφους τοῦ Χάνδακα (ΙΣΤ΄ αἰ.) ἀπό τά ἀρχεῖα τοῦ Δούκα καί τῶν νοταρίων τῆς Κρήτης, Thesaurismata 14 (1977) 175 ff. no. 26.
5. M. Chatzidakis, Les Débuts de l'Ecole Crétoise, pl. $\Lambda\Gamma_2$.
6. M. Achimastou-Potamianou, Φορητές εἰκόνες τοῦ ζωγράφου Μάρκου Στριλίτζα Μπαθᾶ ἤ Μάρκου Βαθᾶ στήν Ἤπειρο, Deltion of the Christian Archaelogical Society 8 (1976-1977), 126 f. pl. 60b.

109

The Presentation of Christ to the Temple, painter Theodosios Potamianos, panel, 51 x 39 cm, Greek, dated 1698.

On the golden ground is inscribed in red capital letters ΥΠΑΠΑΝΤΗ ΤΟΥ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ and on the rosy foreground in white letters: 1698 ΙΟΥΝΙΟΥ 25 ΧΕΙΡ ΘΕΟΔΟΣΙΟΥ ΠΟΤΑΜΙΑΝΟΥ. Close to the Virgin in white capital letters is written ΜΗ̄Ρ ΘῩ; and next to the Christ ΙΣ̄ ΧΣ̄.
The righteous Simeon standing in the bema returns the Child to the Virgin who holds her hands forward ready to receive him. The prophetess Ann behind her holds an open scroll inscribed with the text ΤΟΥΤΟ ΤΟ ΒΡΕΦΟΣ ΟΥΡΑΝΟΝ ΚΑΙ ΓΗΝ ΕΣΤΕΡΕΩΣΕΝ. Joseph follows the prophetess bringing the young pigeons in a basket. The scene illustrates the passage of Luke (2 : 22-38), the only evangelist who mentions the event. The three figures, the Virgin, Ann and Joseph walk on a rosy floor. High and massive buildings stand in the background. The one in the middle, a ciborium with open curtains belongs to the earlier iconography of the subject as we find it in the no. 26 icon from Patmos (1) and in the icon of Damaskinos in the Greek church of Venice (no. 40) (2), while the two lateral buildings of Renaissance character are more recent additions to the iconography of the scene.

The painter Potamianos, who comes from the Ionian Islands and of whom we know of no other work, remains more or less close to older models of the tradition of the Cretan painters both in iconography and technique. The character of his art advances, however, no further than the limits of craftmanship, while the volume and the form of the buildings as well as their disproportion in relation to the human figures indicate remote echoes from the baroque style of his time.
Bibliography: Important Icons from Private Collections, 17th December 1976-15th January 1977, Museum Het Prinsenhof, Delft, Holland, cat. no. 30.

1. M. Chatzidakis, Patmos, no. 26, pl. 24 (end of the 15th century).
2. M. Chatzidakis, Icônes de Saint-Georges des Grècs et de la Collection de l'Institut Hellénique de Venise, p. 63 ff. pl. 29.

110

Eustachius' Vision while Hunting and the Martyrdom of Him and his Family, panel, 51 x 41 cm, Greek, 17th century

Legend and Representation
The legend of Eustachius is well described in many writings (cf. Lexikon der Christlichen Ikonographie, Sechster Band, 1974, p. 194). We will limit ourselves here to the happenings as presented by this icon.
Eustachius began his career under the name of Placidius as a general in the army of the Emperor Trajan (98-117 A.D.). While deer hunting he is said to have seen a vision of a stag with Christ on the cross between its antlers. He immediately became converted to Christianity and henceforth bore the name Eustachius. Represented as a soldier's Saint, Eustachius is seated in rich array on a horse, which is too small. He points his bow at a stag with Christ on the cross between its antlers. It is a beautiful illustration of one of the ambiguities of Byzantine art: movement which suddenly ceases to be movement, you could even call it static movement. The horseman who has approached the stag at a flying gallop reins in his horse to concentrate on his target; his fluttering mantle suggests speed. In the bending of the bow we also see what can be described as frozen movement. Probably the most remarkable aspect of Orthodox art is that it manages to reconcile these contradictions in perfect harmony. The landscape in which this takes place shows the crisis of naturalism, a permanent aspect of Byzantine art with its anti-positivist philosophy. With a certain enthusiasm for artificiality the icon painter has conjured up an almost impressionist landscape. Areas of colour, built up in varying colour combinations, flow one into the other, creating the impression of a capricious landscape in which the flora plays a subordinate role.
The upper part of the icon shows the end of the saint's life. Under the Emperor Hadrian (117-138 A.D.), after many up and downs, he is said to have been tortured to death, together with his family. In an incandescent bronze bull we see the little family group: Eustachius, his wife Theopista and their two sons, Theopitus and Agapitus. Touchingly the parents lay their hands on the shoulders of the two boys. Their faces stern, as though they do not feel the intense heat, the family fulfills its task, under the blessing hands of Christ. The emotionless faces indicate the artistic and religious intent of Orthodox art; the painter makes it clear to us that we are dealing with people whose personality is imbued with superhuman greatness and mystic inaccessability.
The worship of Saint Eustachius became widespread after his death, and even by the early Middle Ages many versions of his legend were extant, the original of which probably came into being in India, though his cult was known in both East and West. His relics were first preserved in Rome but during the 12th century they were moved to Paris, where to this day they are honoured in the St. Eustache church. From the 15th century the Eustachius cult lost popularity, particularly in the West where it suffered from the 'competition' of another hunter saint, Hubertus, who, like Eustachius,

went in pursuit of a gigantic stag which, as the hunt neared its end, turned to face him and revealed a magnificent cross between its antlers. Eustachius has often been represented in religious art; one important work, the Harbaville triptych in the Louvre, includes his figure, while Dürer created a beautiful version of Eustachius' vision in 1505. And finally his martyrdom, which is known from a miniature in the menology of Basilius II (Cod. Vat. gr. 1653 fol. 53).

Inscriptions on the Icon
The inscription on the upper part of the icon reads: 'Marturion tou agiou Eustatiou kai tis inoas tis autou' which can be translated as: 'The martyrdom of St. Eustachius and his scions (family)'.
The inscription of the lower part is fragmentary. It begins with the words 'agiou Eustatiou' and ends with 'k(ai) epiteuse eis auton', which can be translated as: 'St. Eustachius . . . and he sent to him (or: and he instructed him)'.
To be published by Prof.Dr. G. Galavaris in his forthcoming book The Illustrations of the Prefaces in Byzantine Gospels (Byzantina Vindobonensia, XI), Vienna 1979.

111

Saint Anthony the Great, panel, 22 x 17 cm, Egypt or Syria, circa 1700

Saint Anthony the Great, shown half length wearing the habit of a monk. In his hands he holds a text finely inscribed in Nasqhi script, 'I saw the snares of the devil spread out over the Earth, and sighing, I pondered on how to avoid them; and I heard a voice which answered 'by humility'.'

112

Noli Me Tangere, panel, 74 x 54.5 cm, Greek, 17th century

The following inscriptions are preserved: on the golden ground, in red capital letters $\overline{\text{ΙΣ}}$ $\overline{\text{ΧΣ}}$ and in the cross of the nimbus Ο ΩΝ. On the black background of the cave in golden letters Ο ΑΓΙΟΣ ΤΑΦΟΣ. In black capital letters Η ΑΓΙΑ ΜΑΡΙΑ Η ΜΑΓΔΑΛΗΝΗ. Between the two figures
ΒΕ ΕΙ ΣΙ ΘΒ ΒΑΣΤΛ ΑΥΤΟΝ, ΕΙΠΕ ΜΟΙ ΠΟΥ ΣΘΚΚ ΑΥΤΟΝ Κ΄ ΑΓΩ ΑΥ(.....).
And lower down ΡΑΒΒΟΥΝΙ.
The second inscription has obviously been completed by a restorer who did not know Greek and for this reason it must be corrected as follows:
ΚΕ (= Κύριε) ΕΙ ΣΥ ΕΒΑΣΤΑ(ΣΑΣ) ΑΥΤΟΝ, ΕΙΠΕ ΜΟΙ ΠΟΥ ΕΘΗΚΑΣ ΑΥΤΟΝ ΚΑΓΩ ΑΥΤΟΝ ΑΡΩ (John, 20:15).
Below the feet of Christ there are traces of red capital letters in two lines from which can probably be read the name ΓΕΡΑΣΙΜΟΥ and ΚΩΝΣΤΑΝΤΙΝΟΣ and undoubtedly a date ΑΨΝΘ (1759). This is a dedicatory inscription which could have been added later.

The scene copies faithfully in every detail the similar icon in the Hellenic Institute of Venice (no. 96), a work of about 1500 (1). In the icon is represented the appearance of Christ to Mary Magdalene in the garden after His Resurrection as it is described only by John (20:11-17). Christ with obviously the signs of passion on the hands and the ribs grasps in the left hand the end of his mantel, densely decorated with gold striation, while he holds the right hand in a calm gesture of dismissal. Mary Magdalene is depicted kneeling with the blond hair falling on her shoulders and wearing an ample cinnabar red cape. The foreground is painted green with flowers to indicate the garden and in the background rises a jagged mountain with a cave in which lies an open purple sarcophagus with the shroud. The theme of 'Noli me Tangere' has been developed from the Byzantine type and takes in the main elements of its final form in the second half of the 15th century, as found in a wing of a triptych in the Benaki Museum (2). The type of the blond Magdalene with the free falling hair and the ample cape that has a gothicizing drapery is an Italian motif of the 15th century, used by contemporary Cretan painters in painting secular female figures (see also Salome in the icon showing the Decapitation of the Prodrome. More- see p. 108
over, the composition of the formal elements in a strictly geometric pattern – indicated in the formation of an X by the two diagonals – belongs to the classicizing tendencies of this school. It is interesting to note that the type of representation showing the reserved human sentimentality of the two protagonists became popular and was exactly repeated during the 17th century by Emmanuel Lambardos (1603) (3), Victor (1680) (4), Emmanuel Tzane (5) and others. Our icon shows how a painter, a good craftsman, could remain so close to the 15th century type by copying, undoubtedly, one of the intermediary repetitions; more precisely, we would suggest, one of the icons of Emmanuel Lambardos the Elder. It is only natural that the signs of his time are present in this work. Here we observe the same phenomenon we have already noted in the see p. 97
Saint George icon.

1. M. Chatzidakis, Icônes de Saint Georges des Grècs et de la Collection de l'Institut Hellénique de Venise, p. 115 ff., no. 96. I now date this piece around 1500. S. Album, as in the Kortezas icon of Saint George, (page 95) note 1, p. XVII, pl. VII, no. 96.
2. M. Chatzidakis, Les Débuts de l'Ecole Crétoise, pl. KH1, p. 205. See also E. Calliga-Geroulanou, Η σκηνή τοῦ "Μή μοῦ ἅπτου", ὅπως ἐμφανίζεται σέ βυζαντινά μνημεῖα καί ἡ μορφή πού παίρνει στόν 16ο αἰώνα, in Deltion of the Christian Archaeological Society 3 (1926-1963) 203-227.
3. V. Djurić, Icônes de Yougoslavie, Belgrad, 1961, no. 59, pl. LXXX, About the painter, see the description of his icon of Saint George (page 96).
4. In Zante (icon unpublished). About the painter, see the description of his icon of the Virgin of Passion (page 101).
5. P. Vokotopoulos, in Archaeologikon Deltion 25 (1970) B 2, p. 340.

Russian Icons and Related Works of Art

115

The Archangel Gabriel, panel from the Deesis tier of an Iconostasis, 60 x 30 cm, North Russian, 16th century

The Archangel is represented inclining gently towards

the place where the icon of Christ would be placed. He holds a long, slender wand with a trefoil terminal in one hand, and, in the other, a cosmic disc which contains the Christic monogram. His collar and the hem of his robe are edged with jewels.

Formerly Collection Herbette.

116, 117

The Holy Trinity, panel, 88 x 64 cm, Novgorod, late 15th century

The Triune Godhead is symbolically represented in the guise of the three mysterious Angels who visited Abraham on the plain of Mamre (Genesis XVIII, 1-15) and this abstract allusion to the Trinity is that sanctioned by Orthodox tradition. For any representation of the first and third persons of the Trinity in human form, would be dogmatically untenable, since only the Son was incarnate. Depicted against the background there is a tower-like building, a stylised rock and a tree. Each holding a slender staff, the Angels incline their heads in a manner reminiscent of the celebrated composition by Andrei Rubliev. They are seated at a table which is laid out with utensils, a chalice at the centre. The central Angel symbolises Christ and the colour of his garments, a deep wine-coloured chiton and a blue himation, are the colours normally used on icons representing the Saviour. The Son blesses the chalice and bows his head indicating that he accepts the mission assigned to him by the Father – the Angel on his right. In the foreground, Abraham and Sarah proffer bowls which they hold while, out of respect, they cover their hands with garments. The linear abstract geometric ornament, which punctuates the green section of the base of the icon, is a characteristic feature of Novgorod painting. It is not encountered elsewhere. The stylistic qualities of the icon are unmistakably Novgorodian.

Compare with a mid-16th century version of the Trinity, which is tempered by contemporary Moscovite influence, which is in the Russian Museum, Leningrad, (Catalogue no. 132) exhibited 'Painting of the Old Novgorod and Novgorodian territories, 12th to 17th century, Leningrad 1974'.

118, 119

Saint Nicholas, shown half length, panel, 70 x 53 cm, Novgorod, 15th century

One hand composing the Christic monogram, the other holds a closed Gospel book. His robe of carmine red is extensively overlaid in green to form a colour reflex and the sharp contrast of these primary colours is rendered more precise by graphic highlighting in white. The border of the Gospel book, his cuffs and collar are edged with pearls, and their rhythmic distribution play a significant part in the precise 'construction' of the composition.
The hair and beard are finely delineated and the controlled calligraphic highlighting of the face and hands have survived intact.
Flanking the Saint's head, traces of circular vignettes may be discerned. These would have shown the Saviour conferring on Nicholas the Gospel book, and the Mother of God who offers him the Omophorion. The Greek inscription 'Agios Nikolae' stands out sharply against the background. The top and bottom edge of the kovcheg are bordered with red lines in the manner of the early 16th century. The icon is a characteristic example of Novgorod work.

A similar example in the Ostronkhov collection (no. 15) and another formerly in the Rynbushinsky collection (no. 10) were exhibited at the Exhibition of 'Old Russian Art' to mark the tercentenary of the Romanov dynasty, see the exhibition catalogue, Moscow 1913.

120, 121

The Miracle of Flor and Lavr, panel, 92.5 x 67 cm, Novgorod, 15th century

Against the ivory coloured gesso of the background, the figure of the Archangel Michael, his dark wings spread behind him, spanning the mountain. He holds the bridle of a white and a black horse and stretches out his hand to the flanking figures of Flor and Lavr to whom he confers the protection of horses. At the foot of the mountain a herd is driven to a watering place by the sainted Cappadocian grooms Spevesippos, Elevesippos and Melevsippos.

The twin brothers Flor and Lavr, patron saints of horses, were architects and stone masons born in Illyria during the second century. Ordered to build a heathen temple, they converted the local population to Christianity and dedicated the completed building for Christian worship. They were consequently tortured and thrown to their death down a well. According to the Russian version of their 'life', many years later the inhabitants of the place where they met their death observed horses drinking water which flowed from a dried-up well. Investigating, they found the bodies of the brothers at the bottom of the well. On the 18th August, Festival of Flor and Lavr, it is the Russian custom to drive horses to a river or pond. A Molebin is celebrated and after the blessing of the water the horses are bathed.

It is interesting to compare this forceful representation with the softer, refined version of late 15th century Novgorod, influenced by the contemporary style of Central Russia (Tretyakov Gallery, Catalogue no. 124).

122, 123

The Nativity, panel, 54 x 38 cm, Novgorod, circa 1400

Iconographically the icon is based on the texts in the Gospels and apocryphal literature. It follows the early style of simple composition. In the second half of the 16th and, especially, the 17th centuries the rendering became more complex in response to the prevalent attempts to illustrate in detail subordinate events. Such scenes as 'Flight into Egypt', 'Massacre of the Innocents' etc. were often included. Two of the very early surviving representations of the Nativity are to be found one in the book of the Gospels in the Palatinate Library, dated end of the 11th century, the other a

mozaic in the Mortoran in Palermo, dated 1143.

The Novgorod icon should be dated early 15th century. It resembles very closely indeed two wellknown icons of the Nativity. One is to be found in the Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow (i.e. the same Gallery which at one time housed the icon in question) and is described and illustrated in 'Novgorodian Icon-Painting' by V.N. Lazarev, edited by 'Isskustvo', Moscow 1969, plates 38, 39 & 40. This latter icon is a few centimetres larger in size. The other is in George R. Hann's collection in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and is described and illustrated in the 'Meaning of Icons' page 160 by L. Ouspensky and V. Lossky.
The essential elements of 15th century Novgorodian icon-painting are clearly present in this icon. The design is simple, there is no sophisticated elaboration found in Byzantine models. The figures are stocky with the body somewhat overlarge for the head. Elongated heads with slightly arched noses and muscular foreheads. Predominant colourings are shades of green and brown. In the folds of the draperies complimentary tones. Three to five white lines constitute highlights on faces and body.

All the figures on the icon are distributed to provide a fine balance. The eye is drawn immediately to the central recumbent figure of the Virgin set off against the vermilion background. Her head is turned towards Joseph. A white goat beside him. In the lower right-hand corner the hefty figure of a maiden holding the newly born Christ Child. To the left a younger, slimmer maiden pouring water from an ewer into a basin. Beside the Mother of God and against the gaping background of a cave the manger with the Baby Christ. Traditional ass and ox shown contemplating the Saviour with expressions of humility and wonder. To the left the three figures of the Magi holding gifts. These are balanced on the right by a young shepherd blowing his horn and accompanied by a dog. At the top the three angels. Two smaller on the left and a larger on the right facing them, on the other side of the mountain peaks, to provide the balance. At the very top the semicircular symbolical heavenly world. The artist made skilful use of the rock ledges to provide bases for the figures of the icon.
One of the most interesting features of this icon is the relationship between the Virgin and Joseph. The Mother of God's gaze is directed towards the huddled figure. Joseph, as if ashamed of his thoughts, shields with his cloak the side of his face nearest to the Virgin. The artist wanted to convey how the devil, in the guise of the shephard, tempted Joseph into thinking that virgin birth was not possible and to show his personal drama and the Virgin's reproach and compassion towards him.

Provenance: Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow. Inventory no. 738. N. de Koenigsberg.

124

Tabletka, panel, 44.5 x 35 cm, Novgorod, circa 1500

A Tabletka divided into nine scenes in three registers and depicting:
The Praise of the Mother of God
The Scourging of Christ at the column
The Roman soldiers who mock Christ hailing Him as Czar of the Jews
Joseph of Arimathea bearing the Cross to Calvary
The Saviour nailed to the Cross
Joseph requesting Pilate for permission to bury the Body
The taking down from the Cross (deposition)
The laying in the Tomb
The myrrh-bearing women discover the empty Tomb.

125

The Saviour shown bust length, panel, 78 x 59 cm, Novgorod, 1500

The features of the Saviour are laconically expressed by a few deft strokes, executed in a rapid hand, over a ruddy-coloured sankir which, in its turn, is imposed over ochrenie (shadow priming) of a green hue. The hair and beard are finely drawn. Against the incised halo, a brilliant red cross asserts itself starkly. On it are painted the Greek letters O.W.V. denoting the words spoken to Moses 'I am that I am'.

This is ondoubtedly one of the very important icons to be found outside Russia. For further description see the catalogue of the Lanza Collection, compiled by Cyril G.E. Bunt, published by J.B. Shears & Sons, London 1935.

A somewhat similar icon in the Korin Collection in Moscow, dated Novgorod late 14th/early 15th century, is illustrated in colour, see plate 9, in the catalogue compiled by V.I. Antonova of the Tretyakov Gallery and published by 'Iskusstvo', Moscow.
The unusual diapered halo is seen on the icon of Paraskeva, Novgorod School, late 14th/early 15th century in the Old Believers Church at Rogojeskoe, Moscow, and illustrated in colour, pl. 4, in the album published in Moscow, 1956.

Formerly Collection Ambassador Michele Lanza

126

Saint George slaying the Dragon, panel, 31 x 26 cm, Novgorod, 16th century

The legend of St. George slaying the Dragon is said to have taken place at Silene in the province of Libya. St. George entered a town terrorized by a dragon which demanded daily human sacrifice. That day the king's daughter, Princess Elizabeth, awaited her fate outside the wall, when St. George rode to her rescue and killed the dragon, saving the princess from certain death. Afterwards the saint successfully converted the whole town to Christianity.
We see St. George riding on a white charger with his red cloak of martyrdom flying behind him. He reins his horse in and thrusts his lance through the winged dragon's head. The Hand of God appears at the top to administer the blessing.
It is only possible to understand the true character of the Novgorod school of icon painting if one knows the history of the town. The name Novgorod, New Town, means that there must have been another, older town, of which we know little. The town, first mentioned in

Russian chronicles in 862, bears the proud name Weliki Gospodin Novgorod, Great Lord Novgorod. The character of the town, which is reflected in its icons, was formed partly by its trading activities and partly by the fact that it remained undefeated in its golden age despite enemy attacks. The Vikings used to stop in Novgorod on their way over land to Constantinople and there were good lines of communication to the German Hanseatic towns and even to Bochara and China. Novgorod successfully defended itself against Susdal in 1170, which is commemorated by an icon now in possession of the city's own historical museum. The city resisted the Swedes and the Teutonic Knights and – extremely important – was never attacked by the Tartars. For this people, probably about twenty million in total, occupied half of China and almost the whole of Russia and destroyed all their towns during the period 1224-1480. In 1238 Vladimir was devastated by them, in 1239 it was Kiev's turn. The two factors mentioned above: the numerous trading connections plus the ability to defend itself, explain why the art of this proud merchant city could develop as it did, culminating in the greatest of all schools of icon painting. During Novgorod's golden age, from the end of the 14th century and right through the 15th century, government was democratic by a council in which, particularly in moments of crisis, all burghers participated and which took decisions on all matters, whether religious or profane.
Grand dukes, church and merchants commissioned icons, frescoes and sculptures. Originally the Novgorod school had a Byzantine orientation. Of great significance was the work of FeofanGrek, Theophanes the Greek. He must have been summoned to Novgorod in about 1370 and left for Moscow in 1395. He was a very versatile artist and besides his religious paintings also produced works of a worldly nature. Strikingly impressive are his frescoes in the St. Saviour Church in Novgorod and the Christ the Almighty high in the dome is famous. In the Transfiguration Church there is a magnificent Saint Makarios and in the Fjodor Stratilat Church are also frescoes by Theophanes. His oeuvre is characterized by the great sensitivity, the painterly treatment of the faces, the length of his figures, the rich colouring and the frequent use of highlights. Theophanes occupies an unusually important place in het history of Russian art and was also the teacher of Andrej Roebliev, the great icon painter.
There is a very similar icon in Recklinghaus Museum (cat. no. 387).

127

The Last Judgement, panel, 153 x 125 cm, Novgorod, dated 1598

A complex many-figured composition. The action begins in the top right-hand of the panel. Here God the Father is represented in a mandorla of glory which encompasses ranks of Angels. He sends the Son to earth to judge the quick and the dead. Above him, Angels unfold the scroll of the heavens. On the left of the panel, figures of the just can be discerned within the heavenly Jerusalem. At the centre of the composition, beneath another mandorla containing the 'Ancient of Days', is a second mandorla encompassing the enthroned Christ. Flanking this to the left and the right are the prostrate figures of Adam and Eve, enthroned disciples and angels together with the Mother of God and John the Baptist who intercede for humanity and, slightly lower down, Angels prepare the throne, on which a Gospel Book has been placed, for the Second Coming. Flanking the throne, on the left, are figures of the just arranged in groups, and on the right, of the unjust, including groups of foreigners with exotic headgear which stand out incongruously. At a slightly lower level, the good and bad actions of a human soul are weighed on scales while Angels battle with Demons. A roundel shows the Mother of God enthroned in a garden, the four beasts of the Apocalypse (representing the four consecutive Empires of world history) are shown in four spheres, while in another larger sphere the Earth and the Sea are represented giving up their dead. At the lowest register, John Climacos preaches to assembled monks. Meanwhile, monks ascend a ladder to Paradise; some of them lose their footing and fall. Saint Peter stands before the Gates of Paradise holding a key. Sleeping figures are watched by angels and tempted by devils. At the lowest register there are various depictions of the tortures of the damned in hell.

Compare with an icon of the same theme in the Tretyakov Gallery, catalogue number 381, catalogue published Moscow 1962.

128

Christ Enthroned, panel, 78.5 x 54 cm, Novgorod, 15th century

This type of icon is generally displayed in the place of honour on the first tier (Imperial Tier) of an iconostasis immediately to the right of the principle doors and it is paired on the left with the icon of the Virgin and Child. It shows a Christ in Majesty; the Greek 'Pantocrator' the Almighty. Portrayed seated on a throne, He holds the open book containing His teachings towards the viewer.
One is impressed by the majestic and monumental form of Christ seated in a strong somewhat solid pose. His striking features are modelled in opaque brown flesh tints, highlighted around the eyes, brow, mouth and neck with strong white brush strokes, giving Christ a stern, sober countenance. The linear drawing of the ample folds of drapery with the highlighting skilfully employed, gives them a bold decorative pattern.

In our composition the graphic element predominates. The Novgorodian painter liked to relate complimentary or similar shapes in a logical recurring sequence systematically interspersed at regular intervals. In assembling his geometrical shapes and stress-governed motifs the Novgorodian painter relied on line. Our icon is representative of these distinct characteristics; the theme of the curve is taken up in the circular outline at the top at the base of the throne and between them, in the curving fall of drapery over Christ's left knee – the square theme is shown at two superimposed levels of the throne's seat and the foot-stool, with the same lattice decoration – the parallel theme is used in the drawing of Christ's lower legs and this relating to the two basic parallel structures of the supporting posts of the throne. Rendered by these powerful, descriptive

contours and consistant repetition of homogeneous forms against the 'neutral' area of background, shows the artist of this eminent panel, to fully comprehend the techniques and fundamental principles in the balanced and co-ordinated Novgorodian art. It may have been such a style that influenced Matisse when he spoke of his admiration for old Russian icons.

See also: Important Icons from Private Collections, Museum Het Prinsenhof, Delft, Holland, cat. no. 7.

129

A large Iconostasis panel, depicting the Saviour Enthroned in Glory, 74 x 58 cm, Central Russian, circa 1600

Christ is shown enthroned as Ruler of the Universe. He blesses with his right hand and with the other supports an open Gospel book against his knee. His garments, of ochre colour, shimmer with gold assist and his feet rest on a winged 'figure of eight' painted with eyes to represent the Cherubim. The presence of the incarnate God is encompassed by symmetrical geometric shapes of luminous colour, an oval of blue – a circular form (as for example the dome in architecture) being understood as a symbol of the heavens – while the rhomboid-shaped prisms of fiery-red which breach this circle are indicative of the earth. Christ, new Adam, or archetypal man, is the axis between these geometric forms and mediator between Heaven and Earth. The cool contemplative colour of the celestial circle is passive and 'retreats' before the active tone of the terrestrial flame red. This choice of colour appears to contradict man's experience of earth, fertile, passive and feminine but swayed by the active heavens. Here, however, the natural created order is reversed by supra-natural intervention, for the earth is activated by the transfiguring presence of the incarnate God.

See also: Important Icons from Private Collections, Museum Het Prinsenhof, Delft, Holland, cat. no. 8.

130, 131, 132

Pair of Royal Doors, 170 x 81 cm (each panel), Novgorod, 16th century

The Royal Door is most certainly a part of the iconostasis; it permits entry to the sacristy and bema. From this threshold the evangel, literally 'good news', is proclaimed and the iconography has adapted itself to this liturgical usage. On the royal door is the good news the Archangel Gabriel brought to Mary and the four writers of the evangel. In the uppermost segments Gabriel brings the good news to Mary. Very early on it was held that the instant of communication was also the instant of the incarnation, which at the same time marked the beginning of Christian salvation. The message has therefore more or less the same significance as the birth of Christ and may even serve in place of the birth itself. A striking example of this idea is the evangel mosaic in the Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome where the birth is missing from the cycle of the life of Christ.

The moment of proclamation is strikingly portrayed. Maria is on a foot cushion in front of the throne, while an angel has descended to bring her the good news. Humble and with bowed head she receives the message; her right hand is raised in greeting. The angel is more dynamic. With a vigorous gesture he raises his right hand as an indication that he is about to speak. In his left hand he holds the globe of the world to show that his message is meant for the whole world. The background consists of impressive buildings, including a triple-naved church and city walls.

In the four areas beneath the proclamation the evangelists are portrayed. Three of them are seated at desks, writing the evangel (Luke, lower right) or reread what they have written. John forms the exception (left, middle). Tradition has it that his advanced years prevented him from writing it himself, and so he is dictating the evangel to his secretary Prochor. Of this mysterious person is said that a certain H. Prochor, according to the legend one of the first seven deacons, circulated an apocryphal St. John gospel in the fifth century. The painter has allowed himself a certain measure of freedom. With exception of John, the evangelists are portrayed against varying architectural backgrounds. There are also minor variations in the thrones and the writing materials. The painter has realized a truly masterly play with architecture and perspective. He connects architectural elements with the desks so that foreground and background become one, accentuated by the red fela above the heads of Mark and Luke, at the same time an indication that the evangelists are at work indoors. Above each of the evangelists appear symbolic figures, inspired by the visions in Ez. 1:5 and Revelations 4:6, in which John is represented by a lion, Mark by an eagle, Matthew by a human and Luke by a calf. In this the Russian icon painter follows the explanation of Irenaeus of Lyon and not the exegesis of Hieronymus who sees John as the eagle and Mark as the lion, a view which is particularly popular in the West.

134

Descent from the Cross, panel, 75 x 59 cm, Novgorod, circa 1500

According to the Evangel the descent from the cross precedes Christ's burial. Matthew (27, 57-60), Mark (15, 42-47) and Luke 23, 50-56) all write that it was the audacious Joseph of Arimathea who went to Pilate and asked for Christ's body. John also reports that Nicodemus was also present at the descent from the cross. Though this may seem surprising, as Nicodemus was a rich man of some considerable social standing, we should remember that he publicly defended Christ in the Sanhedrin (John 7 : 51). Further, the bible mentions the presence of Mary Magdelene and the other Mary (Matt. 27 : 61), whom Mark assumes to be Joseph's mother (15 : 47). Luke does not mention the women by name but refers to the women of Galilee (23 : 55). Artists have collected these facts and portrayed them in their works, interpreting them, sometimes adding details which are not to be found in the bible. For example, Mary, Christ's mother and St. John, his favourite disciple, are always present.

The icon shows how the dead body is being removed from the cross and the painter gives an almost histori-

cal account of the proceedings. Joseph of Arimathea has climbed up a ladder and is holding the body, helped by Mary. Nicodemus is seated at the foot of the cross, pulling out the nails. St. John bends forward with his hands raised as though asking if he can help. To the right the women of Galilee watch these dramatic events. Full of grief, in conformity with antique usage they raise their hand to their cheek: what a medium of expression to emphasize their sorrow! The architecture is rather surprising. A long facade, to represent the walls of Jerusalem, completes the picture. The architectural elements themselves are substantial but their relationship towards each other is quite unrealistic. The painter is trying to mislead us. His efforts are not to reproduce reality but to present us with the magical connection between possible and impossible structures. It is a play with perspective; if we examine the Joseph figure on the ladder then this becomes readily apparent. The painter wants to create the impression that the ladder is behind the cross. Nevertheless Joseph is shown between the body of Christ and the cross. Really beautiful is the treatment of Mary in the group of figures to the right, for there is no room for them on Calvary. So the painter places them on a dais which is actually much too small but is harmonically linked to the architecture in the background.

And finally, this fantastic architecture. We do not know how far it was from Calvary to this facade. Any link between the foreground and background is absent. Left and right of the mountain are archivolts without surporting pillars, above them a decorative wall with capitals. Again we do not know exactly what the painter is trying to tell us. Two walls, the foremost lighter in colour than the other, would seem to suggest that the painter is trying to give the impression of looking down on the city. In fact, the painter's view of architecture is in the same genre as that with which artists like Piranesi and Escher later gained world fame.

135

The Anastasis, panel, 32 x 26 cm, Moscow, second half of the 16th century

Christ, his ochre-coloured robe enriched with gold assist, raises Adam from the dead. Below the Saviour's feet one discerns the entrance to Hell – its doors and bolts shattered – and the captive souls peering out.

136

Eleousa Madonna, panel, 31.5 x 26 cm, Moscow, early 16th century

'Eleousa Madonna' indicates a portrait of Mary lovingly embracing her child, who tenderly snuggles up to his mother. The portrayal is very intimate. Mary is deep in thought, aware of what will happen to her son. This portrayal demonstrates how joy and happiness, tranquil sadness and anxiety form an essential relationship between the two. There is no portrayal in Orthodox art which expresses this better. Eleousa icons are an expression of intimacy and precisely for this reason are they so loved by the Orthodox community.

Mary holds Christ against her left shoulder with her head bent over him. Noteworthy is the manner in which she holds the child: her right arm is placed under his left leg, at the same time passing over his right foot to support his body. Her left arm is behind his back in a gesture of protection. The maphorion partly covers the child, thereby emphasizing the element of protection. The finely chiselled face of Mary betrays anxiety about her son's future: her eyes stare into eternity. The spirituality of the face is accentuated by the sorrowful eyes, the long nose and small mouth. Usual in Eleousa representations is that the child has his arms around his mother's neck. In this icon the child has the seam of the maphorion in its one hand, while it places the other against its mother's cheek. Just one example of the artistic freedom possible within the tradition of painting icons.

137

The Smolensk Mother of God, panel, 61 x 52 cm, Moscow, 1500

The delicacy of the painting and the artist's avoidance of extensive highlighting place this icon close to the style of which Dionysii was a master. The Sankir of a greenish hue is overlaid with a ruddy colour on the cheeks.

The elegant outline of the Virgin's hand, with the elongated tapering fingers, conveys a sense of movement in the manner of the best Byzantine painting. The prototype of the icon is derived from the Byzantine imagery of the Hodegetria 'she who points the way'. Christ child blesses with his right hand and holds a scroll as an attribute of divine wisdom. His robes, entirely covered with gold hatching (assist), further accentuate his divinity, gold being a symbol for irradiating divine energy.

The icon is encased in a finely worked chased parcel-gilt oklad, worked in repoussé with rampant foliate ornament in a 19th century adaption of 17th century motifs. The inscription plaques are skillfully wrought in niello and the haloes are set with amethysts and garnets bordered with small turquoises. The oklad has the maker's mark.

138

Saint Simeon Styalitis, workshop of Metropolitan Makary, panel, 31 x 16 cm, Russian, 1580-1610

The vertical shape of the panel emphasises the upward thrust of the tall narrow tower, at the summit of which appears the figure of the Styalite. His bust-length figure is framed by an architectural superstructure of ciborium form raised on four slender columns and from one of which a wicker basket is suspended. It is in this way, we are given to understand, that the Styalite receives his food. Nevertheless the icon shows a doorway at the base of the tower and here the figure of a monk may be seen entering the tower.

The background of the icon is neither gold nor is it painted in the light colours traditionally employed for the neutral area of the background. Its sombre olive hue serves as a foil to offset both the gilt cursive inscription and provide a contrast for a subtle gamut of pure clear colours. This icon, with its fantastic architecture and carefully elaborated colour scheme, is a

good example of the refined workmanship by artists employed in the Kremlin by Metropolitan Makary or the Stroganovs. Compare with an icon of the same subject in the Tretyakov Gallery (catalogue no. 524). The latter icon, also from the workshop of Metropolitan Makary, was formerly in the collection of I.S. Ostroukhov. See also no. 693 in the same catalogue for another icon dated 1605.

Simeon Styalitis 356-459, early Christian ascetic from Egypt. His almost unbelievable ascetic feats are attested by various historians. Professed to be a monk at the age of 18, his wisdom inspired Persians, Ethiopians, Hindus, Scythians and Arabs. To escape the crowds of pilgrims, he retreated to the top of a pillar on which a cabin was built for him to withdraw to. The feast of Saint Simeon falls on 1 September, which had been instituted as New Year's Day by Emperor Constantine the Great in 312 (the date of New Year's Day was changed to 1 January in the West during the 9th century).

139

The Annunciation, an Iconostasis panel from the festival tier, 78 x 61.5 cm, Russian, early 17th century

Against an architectural background composed of two tall buildings, between which a red cloth is suspended – a device which denotes that the scene is an interior one – the Mother of God stands to receive the Angel's message. In her surprise, she lets fall from her hand a skein of red wool. The background colour is an unusual tone of deep green against which the calligraphic inscription designating the subject matter stands out vividly to form a decorative frieze. The highlights are executed sparingly.

See also: Important Icons from Private Collections, Museum Het Prinsenhof, Delft, Holland, cat. no. 29.

140

The Anastasis, panel, 30 x 23 cm, Pskov, early 16th century

Standing upon the broken gates of Hell, Christ is shown dragging the kneeling figures of Adam and Eve from their tombs. He is flanked by the figures of Prophets and Apostles whose presence attests to the fulfilment of their prophecies. The usual iconographic composition of the Anastasis shows Christ raising Adam with his right hand, while in his left, he holds a scroll or a cross. The iconography here used where the Saviour raises Eve with his left hand is that habitually found in Pskov icon painting, and although there are instances to be found in the monumental wall painting of the 14th and 15th century in the Byzantine world, (e.g. the Church of the Saviour in Chora in Constantinople, and Nicholas Orphanos in Thessaloniki) no analogous icon panels appear to be known outside Pskov.

The kovcheg is painted with busts of Saints, the upper border showing the figures of the Mother of God, Archangel Michael, Peter and Paul so as to form a Deesis. The remaining bust portraits represent Saints Nicholas, George, Katherine of Alexandria, Paraskevi, Dimitri and the Prophet Elijah. The calligraphic inscriptions have a precise rhythmic distribution. The colour range and the exact nervous application of the white highlights, especially on the faces, are characteristic of Pskov. In Pskov icons, painted prior to the 16th century, the Saviour's garments were not ochre but invariably an orange or raspberry red, and the choice of this colour would seem to indicate the link between Pskov and the painterly tradition of such Eastern Christian centres as Cappadocia where it was customary to bury the dead in red grave-clothes.

Kondakion: Christ is risen from the dead, by his death he tramples down death and gives life to those entombed.

141

The First Russian Martyrs, panel with stamped silver basma, 25 x 31 cm, Novgorod, end of the 15th century

This icon of the Princes Boris and Gleb together with the Prophet Elijah represented half length, has been transferred to a new panel probably circa 19th century when the background was overlaid with stamped silver basma from the 16th or 17th century. Clearly these three figures originally formed part of a larger composition, probably centred by one of the saints popular in Novgorod such as Nicholas. The proportion of the new panel suggests that the restoration was probably done during the revival of interest in old Russian art during the first decade of the 19th century.

SS. Boris and Gleb were the two youngest sons of Vladimir, the Grand Duke of Kiev who lead his people to Christianity. They were the first two national saints of Russia, they offered protection to riders and horses. After the death of St. Vladimir in 1015, all his sons were to have shared the inheritance. But Svyatopolk, the eldest, not wishing to share equally declared his intention to kill his brothers. Upon returning from an expedition to quell the nomadic tribes, Boris was informed of the sinister plot. Despite his military training he voiced his aversion to taking up arms against his brother and sent his followers away. He seated himself by the River Alta and that night mediated on various martyrs. Early the following morning a group of men sent by Svyatopolk entered his tent and assassinated him.
St. Gleb was killed soon after. Whilst travelling to Kiev on the 'Dnieper' his boat was boarded near Smolensk by armed men. They were buried close to Kiev and their tomb became a place of pilgrimage.

142

The Resurrection of Lazarus, panel, 72 x 57.5 cm, North Russian, 16th century

Early Christians saw the miracles of Christ as a signal of the approach of the kingdom of God. A miracle is something quite different from everyday affairs and it was because of this that believers felt the presence of God. The miracle was a certain form of dialogue between God and Man which explained God's behaviour.
Christ's miracles have rarely been portrayed on icons,

and the exception here is the Resurrection of Lazarus. As one of the twelve principal feasts, it has even found its place on the feast day row of the iconostasis. The resurrection of Lazarus is a foretaste of Christ's own death and resurrection and the feast day preceeds Easter, being celebrated in the Christian church on the Saturday before Palm Sunday. Christ became very popular by bringing Lazarus back to life. The population of Jerusalem received him enthusiastically but the government, a little afraid of this popular hero, used the resurrection as an excuse to arrest Christ (John 11 : 45-57).

In the Russian icon art this resurrection is dealt with more or less according to an abstract order which emphasizes the transcendental aspects, in which solemnity and stylized movement are dominant. Alone amidst the others, Christs raises his right hand elegantly in a sign of blessing which brings new life to Lazarus. In his left hand Christ holds a closed scroll, which he always has with him. It is as though he has just arrived, the movement of a stride is still visible. The other main figure is Lazarus. Still wrapped in a white shroud he has been brought back to life, as his wide open eyes show. The darkness of the grave adds extra emphasis to the contours of his body. Behind Christ stand the apostles, very closely pressed together in a fashion typical for late 15th and 16th century works. The people of Bethania are also shown pressed closely together in the same manner.

The three further figures form a playful element in the composition. Martha and Maria, Lazarus' two sisters, lie at Christ's feet begging him to bring him back to life, apparently unaware of the fact that the miracle has already taken place. The third person is carrying away the sarcophagus in which Lazarus very recently had lain. The liberties which the painter takes with reality can be seen from the size of the coffin. But he wants only to show us that very recently this was where Lazarus was, the size of the coffin is not important. The landscape, with whimsical mountain peaks, is completely barren, without any vegetation; apparently this Russian icon painter is not interested in this aspect, he finds the events themselves more significant. The city in the background, between the two mountain ranges, is a decorative element. Typically Russian houses rise out above the city walls. It is an architectural language which expresses a new national consciousness; while in the 15th century there was still a preference for Byzantine architecture with its rounded arches, in the 16th century the choice is made for the Russian style of building of which the saddle roof is so characteristic.

143

The Praise of the Mother of God, panel, 63.5 x 38 cm, Yaroslav, early 17th century

A large panel icon from a small wooden church on the shores of the river Dvina, depicting the Mother of God – an image of Christ Emmanuel upon her breast – seated on an ornamental gilt throne, her feet resting on a footstool. All rendered within a mandorla composed of three different tones of blue irradiated with golden assist and spangled with stars. The mandorla is surrounded by cohorts of angels represented against a background of green scrolling clouds; Emmanuel holds a long red lance which extends to the bottom left corner of the composition to pierce Satan through the heart; the mouth of hell, in the form of a double-faced monster, opens to receive his falling figure. At the bottom register from the windows of the upper storey of an ornamental tower, angels place golden crowns on the heads of the saints who pass beneath the tower doorway into a circular garden symbolising Paradise; within this enclosed space one may discern SS. Basil and John Chrysostomos, King David and Saul and prophets and apostles including Peter, John the Baptist and Paul. At the middle register, the three mounted Magi follow the star to which the leading horseman points; and shepherds hear the angels' tidings. On the right of the central mandorla encompassing the Mother of God, stands the Archangel Gabriel, his presence serving to indicate the Annunciation; and as Mary spins red wool on a distaff, she turns towards him; the top and bottom border of the kovcheg with explanatory texts executed in black cursive script against an ochre ground.

See S. Maslenitsyn, Yaroslav Icon Painting, Moscow 1973, plate 49 for a panel icon displaying similar stylistic tendencies.

144

Mother of God Smolenskaya, ivory, 7.5 x 6 cm, Russian, 15th century

The border of this ivory icon is carved with a Te Deum to the Holy Virgin. The silver gilt filigree basma is mounted with semi-precious stones.

145

The Great Hierarch, 5.5 x 4.5 cm, boxwood, Russian, first half of the 16th century

A miniature boxwood icon, pierced and carved in relief with a bust length effigy of Christ vested as the Great Hierarch , a tall mitre on his head, the homophorion draped across his shoulders, the halo inscribed with the Greek letters which denote the words spoken to Moses 'I am that I am', mounted in a silver surround set with eight pearls.
During the 16th and early 17th century, the crown of the mitre tended to be less high since the basic form adhered to continue to be that of the Imperial crown as worn by the Paleologue dynasty prior to the fall of Constantinople.
See T.V. Nikolayeva, Plastic Art of Old Russia, small carvings and castings, Moscow 1968, plate 78 for a similar silver setting decorated with pearls and containing miniature wood carving, dated to the early 16th century.

146

A wooden Crucifix, 22 x 13 cm, Russian, late 16th century

The crucifix is divided into four quarters. At the top the Trinity from the Old Testament is portrayed, directly beneath this the crucifixion with four mourners below the transverse axis of the crucifix. Each of the two

lower quarters shows three saints. The quarters have broad borders. Nail heads and holes suggest that the edges were covered in metal, though not entirely, for in the uppermost edges of the transverse axis names have been carved and there are also remnants of paint. The crucifix was executed in polychromy, a normal practise in Russia. This method resulted in a close relationship between painting and sculpture, though Russian sculptors had to limit themselves considerably. There can be no doubt that they were looking for new methods of three-dimensional expression, though not altogether successfully. Partly because they were unable to liberate themselves of the current two-dimensional style of painting, partly because attempts of this kind were forbidden by the Church. In the first instance by the Stoglav Concilium (1551); later intensified by imperial decrees and synodal resolutions, e.g. in 1727, 1767, 1832 and 1835. The fact that measures of this kind were necessary so often is in itself an indication that obedience was not automatic. Anyway, the art of the relief seems to have defied prohibition of this kind.
Reliefs show the same basic style as paintings. The figures are portrayed frontally and do not resemble a sculpture in any way. During the 16th and 17th centuries the figures were carved out in a primitive fashion, and it is only in the 18th and 19th century that this art form demonstrates sophistication. The forms used changed accordingly. In the 16th century the bas relief dominated, and only in the 17th century were the figures able to free themselves gradually from the ground, while in the 18th and 19th centuries the background receded and the figures themselves demanded all attention. For these reasons we can place this crucifix in the second half of the 16th century.

147

A wooden crucifix with stamped silver basma, 47 cm high, Russian, mid 16th century

Wooden crucifix carved in relief with the figure of the crucified Saviour, flanked by the half length figures of the Mother of God, Mary Magdalene, St. John and the Centurion Longin. Two further Saints are shown full length at the arms of the Cross, and the Holy Trinity is depicted above. The base of the Cross is carved with the standing figures of Saints Ephremy, Nicholas, Kyril and Avraamy. The neutral area of the background and the borders are embellished with stamped metal basma.
Unlike naturalistic and humanist sculpture, old Russian carving is intended to be viewed only from the front, the figures being placed against a flat, painted background. These figures appear standing immobile: the surface is gessoed in the same manner as in icon painting, the incised folds of the garments being subordinated to an overall geometric construction with calligraphic dark linear drawing and contrasting highlights precisely as though it were the flat surface of a panel icon.
No specialised study of the role of sculpture in old Russian culture yet exists, and some art critics continue to assert that pre-Petrine sculpture is of minor importance. The idea is still current that Orthodox tradition has maintained a hostile attitude to the sculptural medium, despite the evidence of small scale and miniature carving in bone, wood and stone – often of superlative quality – as well as, for example, the monumental bas-reliefs covering the surface of churches in the region of Vladimir-Suzdal.
Wood carvings of this type are on permanent display in the church of the 'Laying of the Garments' in the Moscow Kremlin. An illustrated monograph on this theme by N. Pomerantsev appeared circa 1970, and M.V. Alpatov includes a chapter on wooden sculpture in his History of Russian Art, Volume 1, Moscow 1968. Compare with a wooden cross in Ousspensky and Lossky 'The Meaning of Icons', Basle, 1952, plate facing page 186.

148

Metal Icons

Metal icons are not substitute icons, that is, they were created not for especially pious believers but for poor ones. As is the case with painted icons, there are simple examples as well as expensive ones of high quality. However, they do possess a special character as they are of imperishable material and also because of their small size, which automatically gave them the quality of 'pocket icons'.
Little study has been done on the subject of metal icons and the first specialized exhibition devoted to them was held only as recently as 1977 in the Osnabrück Kulturgeschichtliches Museum, where 152 pieces were exhibited. There can be no doubt that they originated in the Byzantine epoch; a number of bronze icons dating to the period 900-1100 has been preserved.
Though metal icons often reflect the themes used for wooden icons, we do also encounter representations much less common for the wooden variety: diptychs, triptychs and quadriptychs. The borders of metal icons were often made separately and illustrate a variety of themes and the same applies to parts added later, such as frontons.

153

The Dormition of the Mother of God, bronze and enamel, 28.5 x 23.5 cm, Russian, 19th century

On the upper half are shown the twelve apostles assembled around the bier of the Mother of God. Below, Maria is brought on clouds to Jerusalem by angels, as recounted in old legends. Angels too, are carrying the soul of the Virgin, swathed in white within a mandorla, to the Gates of Paradise.

155

Saint Nicholas, shown half-length, holding the open Gospels, bronze and enamel, 27 x 24 cm, Russian, 18th century

According to tradition Saint Nicholas was Archbishop of Myra in Lycia, Asia Minor, during the 4th century. The cult of Saint Nicholas in Russia had its source in Byzantium where it was already firmly established by the 9th century. The Orthodox Church's loss of relics to the Latins somehow seemed to increase the veneration of the saint universally. The bones of Saint Nicholas were buried with ceremony in Bari, South Italy, on the 9th May, 1087. Like Saint George, Saint Nicholas had the privilege of belonging to both the Orthodox and Latin churches, inspiring great pilgrimages

to his burial place in Bari. He became the patron saint of countries, dioceses, cities, ports, churches, sailors, and merchants and, of course, children, the original 'Father Christmas' and both the Eastern and the Latin churches celebrate his memory on 6th December.

160 (1)

A Pair of Parcel Gilt and Niello Plates, diameter 21.4 cm, weight 228 grams each, Russian, late 17th century

The cavetti of these plates are engraved with three stylised gilt tulips emerging from a single stalk. The rims have sinuous tendrils and a heraldic device, apparently effaced, against a nielloed background of tiny tendrils and blossoms, encircled by an elaborate ropetwist border.

Reference: Russian Art Exhibition, London 1935, nos. 197 and 197a.

161 (2)

A Silver Gilt Charka, 4.6 cm heigh, weight 90 grams, Russian, 17th century

This charka has a lobed and flared foot. Its cinquefoil handle is chased in relief with Samson struggling with the Lion amid briars. The interior of the bowl is repoussé in high relief with Jonah and the Whale, a seahorse, a mermaid and other creatures of the sea against a ground engraved with swirls to suggest waves.

A silver model of a swan has been applied to the centre of the charka. The exterior is repoussé with eagles perched amid branches of fruit against a stippled ground. The engraving on the rim reads 'Charka of an honest man, drink from it to your health, praising God'. Inscribed on the underside of the base is the weight in Russian measures (21 zolotniks).

The imagery used on these charki may be interpreted as reflecting the ancient link between the art of the silversmith and alchemy. According to a coherent symbolism, silver is an image of the original uncorrupted state of the soul, or of the virginal condition of pure materia prima. It is also the faithful mirror of its complimentary pole 'the Universal Spirit' which is also manifest in the sun, and in the 'congealed light of earthly sun'–gold. Thus the gilding of the silver implies the reflection of the active sun (the Spirit) in the passive moon of the soul. The free standing bird, or soaring eagle, may be interpreted as the Spirit which imposes conditions upon the passive soul. (The same symbolism is apparent in the cross superimposed over a crescent moon frequently encountered above Russian cupola.) Because of the ambivalence of symbolism, the bird may also be seen as the 'seed' of gold and silver – 'the liberated' spiritual part of untamed nature or materia prima (as viz. a manuscript in Basle University dated 1550).

There exists 14th century silver Egyptian and Syrian bowls centred by a bird in the guise of a sun symbol which is understood as the source and guardian of the waters which spring from it. Water being another manifestation of the same cosmic or divine principle which is elsewhere reflected in silver, the moon and the human soul.

See Titus Burckhardt Alchemy, London, 1967. See also Eva Baer Islamic Fishponds Representations, Bulletin of Oriental and African Studies, 1938. For the significance of animal symbolism see Gubermaitis, Le Symbolisme des animaux dans l'art.

161 (3)

A Silver Gilt Korchik, 13.4 cm wide, weight 96 grams, Novgorod, 17th century

A helmeted mask in relief amid trefoil scrolls in Renaissance style forms the handle and a lobed finial the prow. The interior of the bowl shows as central boss a lion rampant holding a bowl in relief. Inscribed around the rim on the exterior is 'Korchik of Vassili and Ivan Semyonovitch Maslennikov – drink to your health and contentment'. The rim being furthermore ornamented in relief with roundels containing a lion, a unicorn and a double-headed eagle enclosed by leafy scrolls. Novgorod Kovshi and Korchiki are often distinguished by their height and by their bases being raised on the backs of lions or griffins (1). Our korchiks' circular foot rests on the back of three lions as feet. There is an inscription on the underside. The interior section is missing.

1. See M.M. Postnikova-Loseva, Russian Silver, Moscow 1974, p. 44, for an explanatory text on a Novogorod korchik.

161 (4)

A Silver Gilt and Niello Diskos, diameter 20.5 cm, weight 330 grams, Russian, late 17th century

The cavetto of this liturgic plate is engraved with the image of the Mother of God of the Sign, with Christ Emmanuel in a roundel upon her breast. Above the Virgin's upraised arms are representations of cherubim and seraphim against a background of miniscule tightly scrolled tendrils and blossoms. The rim has a similar nielloed background with four bands of calligraphic script 'In You O Mother of God lies all my hope, preserve me!' interrupted by engraved foliage.

The Diskos is the plate on which the consecrated bread is placed during the Divine Liturgy. The Mother of God of the Sign is traditionally depicted in the conch of the apse above the altar. By placing the image of the Virgin of the Sign – (who contains the incarnate God within her womb) – in proximity to the transfigured bread and wine, the 'spirit-bearing' potential of matter and all created existence – manifested through the Incarnation – is re-enacted and 'imaged' as a cosmic principle.

Although the iconography and outline drawing of this image are purely 'Orthodox' and 'local', the influence of European art is discernible in the linear strokes of the drawing, notably in the fine graphic lines of the shading, placing emphasis on physical reality, and thereby limiting the representation to a particular place and time. Shading is alien to Eastern Christian art where the role of artistic representation has been differently understood. The use of linear hatching to denote shading is reminiscent of Western woodcuts and engravings then current in Russia. In this instance

the handling of 'shading' is still sufficiently 'abstract' to prevent any real intrusion of naturalism into the image.

Compare the method of linear drawing used here to that of the 15th century master craftsman Amvrosy (Trinity Sergei Monastery) whose work, with its terse calligraphic strokes and structural contours, epitomises the abstract timelessness and sense of underlying rhythm of the mainstream of Eastern Christian art. See also M.M. Postnikova-Loseva Russian Silverware, Moscow, 1974, pages 41, 60 and 61 for diski with the same subject.

162 (5)
A Silver Gilt Charka, 3.5 cm high, weight 96 grams, Russian, mid 17th century

This silver gilt charka is enriched with blue and green enamel, the interior of the bowl with a boss composed of geometric ornament and an inscription against a blue enamel ground: 'He maintains his reason who drinks and looks not . . .'. The obverse of the handle has a shaped outline, repoussé with Samson and the lion. The reverse is ornamented with a stylised plant, a bird, a lion, and a unicorn. Circumscribed on the exterior rim of the bowl is the Slavonic inscription 'Charka of an honest man, drink from it to your health, glorifying God and praying long life for the Czar'. Six trefoil shaped panels enclose stylised geometric ornament in blue and green enamel, and with further animals including the lion, the unicorn, a hare, and birds, their names inscribed above in rectangular reserves, each animal flanked by plants.

Reference: Russian Art Exhibition, London 1935, no. 183.

162 (6)
A Silver Gilt Korchik, 7.2 cm high, 10.2 cm wide weight 128 grams, Novgorod, late 17th century

The prow of this small silver gilt korchik is surmounted by a helmeted female bust in Renaissance style. The handle is chased with a bird amidst foliage. The interior of the bowl shows a repoussé bird in combat with a dragon, surrounded by various sea creatures including a whale, a lobster, two fish, and a bifid merman against stylised waves.
The inscription on the rim reads 'True love is like a golden vase which never breaks'; maxims being a characteristic feature of Novgorodian silver. The exterior is furthermore ornamented in relief with a lion, a unicorn, and two birds enclosed by leafy scrolls. The domed base is similarly decorated.

The bird in combat with a dragon represents the fusion of the two fundamental forces of firm 'male' sulphur and volatile 'female' quicksilver. The dragon being understandable as the initial, and the eagle as the final form of quicksilver. The lion and the unicorn are likewise symbols of sulphur and quicksilver, the conquest of one over the other signifying the 'fixing' of quicksilver by sulphur. The maxim refers to the inner equilibrium of the soul which finds its reflection in the stability of gold – the prototype of metallic perfection.

162 (7)
Silver Gilt Charka, 4 cm high, weight 100 grams, Russian, 17th century

This silver gilt charka has a flared foot. The handle is pierced and chased with animals and foliage around a plain square cartouche. The interior of the bowl has been applied with a relief model of a bird in flight and is repoussé and chased in relief with Jonah and the whale, sea horses and mermaids, against a swirling stylised sea. Four medallions containing a unicorn, a horse, a griffin and an eagle, interspersed with ornamental devices decorate the exterior.

Reference: Russian Art Exhibition, London 1935, no. 203 as from the Imperial collection.

162 (8)
An Episcopal Staff, 152 cm long, 17th century

The wooden shaft of this episcopal staff is overlaid with intarsia work in alternating geometric panels of mother-of-pearl and tortoise shell, each layer being secured by a silver pin. The staff is interrupted by two baluster shaped knops of inlaid wood, and has a turned ivory terminal. The top is surmounted by confronting heads of phantasmagoric animals resembling dragons and serpents, their mouths open to bite another, their eyes set with corals.

When the 'Divine Act' which governs the Cosmos is symbolically represented by a motionless vertical axis, the 'course' of nature in relation to it – 'its successive rollings and unrollings' – is like a spiral which winds itself around the axis. This is the meaning of the primordial symbol of the serpent or dragon which attaches itself to the axis of the Tree of Life. It will be remembered that when Hermes used his staff to strike a pair of serpents in combat with one another, the blow tamed the serpents and caused them to wind themselves around his staff; an act which conferred on Hermes the theurgic power of 'binding and loosing' of transmuting Chaos into Cosmos. The imagery of entwined serpents and dragons biting one another is virtually universal. In the West, it may be found in Irish, Anglo-Saxon and in Romanesque art.

See Titus Burckhardt, Alchemy, London 1967, pp. 130-138, and also, René Guénon, The Symbolism of the cross, London, 1958, chapters VII, IX and XXV. See Celal E. Arseven, Les Arts Decoratifs Turcs, Istanbul, 1953, p. 209. Examples of this type of work may be found widely on Mount Athos.

162 (9)
A Pair of Parcel Gilt Spoons, the larger 21 cm long, weight 118 grams, Russian, mid 17th century

Designed to slip one within the other and held in place by a movable ring, this pair of parcel gilt spoons is engraved with stylised flowers and leafage. The finial of the larger spoon bears the form of a fantastic animal.

Reference: Russian Art Exhibition, London 1935, no. 221.

Glossary

Icon

The word icon means 'image', in the sense of a visible and material reflection of things unseen or spiritual. The icon is therefore the symbol or manifestation in formal or pictorial terms of unseen and spriritual realities. It reveals something of the 'divine world order', and conveys an awareness of persons and events hidden from an ordinary state of perception.

But the icon does not merely reflect the divine in an indirect or metaphorical manner; it actually partakes of the reality of which it is the image. It is charged with something of the life of what it images, becoming a centre of power, an embodiment of the spiritual energy of its divine or deified archetype. In this way the icon parallels the central mystery of the Christian Tradition, the Incarnation; it, too, testifies to the interpenetration of the supra-natural and the natural, the spiritual and the material, the divine and the human. Consequently it has a sacramental function.

This nature and function of the icon determines its stylistic qualities; they account for the abstraction, the structural calligraphic drawing, and the emphasis on rhythm and colour, excluding naturalistic 'realism' in the modern sense of the word.

Tradition
Tradition aims to keep faith with a divine Revelation at its origin. An artist who participates in a Tradition has a sense of sharing in what has been revealed. Guided by sacred canons, he continues to bear witness, and indeed re-enact the Revelation through his work.

Iconostasis
The screen which partitions off the sanctuary, symbolic of the spiritual world, from the rest of the church – the material sensible world where the congregation stands. Hiding and revealing the mystery of the Holy of Holies, the iconostasis is hung with icons arrayed in tiers according to a comprehensive cosmological scheme. In its complete form, the iconostasis has five tiers. The lowest of these is pierced with three doors, themselves icons, used by the clergy at specific instances in the liturgy. The central or Royal doors (see below) are flanked by the icons of the Christ and the Mother of God, the remaining icons having local significance. Above the doors is the Deesis tier (see below) and above that Festivals, through which the Church's teaching is mystically revealed. Over and above these are the Prophets of the Old Testament who foretold the Incarnation; The Patriarchs, who preceded them, complete the scheme.

Deesis
The row of icons which in the church scheme is placed immediately over the doors of the Iconostasis. At the centre, above the Royal doors, Christ is shown enthroned. The other icons of the screen represent the saints who, dwelling in Paradise, stand before his throne in intercessory prayer (Deesis). Their presence on the screen serves to unite the sanctuary – with the altar at its heart – and the world of Man (represented by the space reserved for the believers) for which the liturgy holds out the promise of grace through the operation of the divine energies.

Royal Doors
The symbolic meaning of a door implies the passage from one world into another. The central doors or gates of the Iconostasis, which give access into the sanctuary, are called 'Royal' because it is through them that the King of Glory is carried, in the form of the sacraments, the bread and the wine. The significance of the opening and closing of these doors, and the processions of clergy who pass through them, vary at different moments of the liturgical drama. They can symbolise the opening of the gates of Paradise, Christ's entry upon his mission, the entry into Jerusalem or the entry into Our Lord's tomb. Through them the priest, in his impersonal function of divine Messenger, descends into the 'Cave of the World'.

Assist
(The root of the world is ass, meaning 'sun') Gold leaf linear hatching. Used to denote the radiation of divine energy, as for instance, on the garments of the Saviour. In later Icons the symbolic significance of Assist is often lost to the point of becoming mere decoration.

Basma
Ornamental metal strips nailed to the neutral area of the background of an icon.

Chiton
Under-garment or tunic.

Chlamys
A short cloak fastened on the right shoulder.

Encolpion
A hollow hinged pendant, sometimes in the form of a cross, intended to contain relics.

Himation
Outer garment (toga).

Kondakion (or Troparion)
A short verse or hymn which explains the meaning of a feast; it is therefore the counterpart, in poetic terms, of an icon.

Kovcheg (literally 'Ark')
The narrow raised border round the edge of the icon formed by the recessing of the field. It solves the transition between the flat world of the image and the three-dimensional space inhabited by the viewer, acting as a barrier between the natural world and the microcosm of the universe as expressed on the field of the icon. It is also a point of contact between these two worlds, and recalls the border on an Islamic prayer rug or the idea of a niche.

Levkas (gesso)
The foundation composed of fish-glue and chalk on which the painting is executed.

Maphorion
Woman's head covering, reaching down to the feet and leaving the front part of the neck exposed.

Molebin
Appropriate prayers read by a priest for a specific occasion.

Ochrenie
Ochre and lighter flesh tones superimposed on the sankir.

Oklad
Precious metal revetment on an icon which encompasses, partially or fully, the painting, but leaves the faces and hands exposed.

Omophorion
Episcopal stole. It signifies, according to Saint Simon of Thessaloniki 'the lost sheep which, when he found them, the Lord carried on his shoulders'.

Riza
Part of the oklad covers the area of garments on an icon. In present day usage this term is often applied to the Oklad.

Sankir
Basic priming colour tone. Used to cover the face and other parts of the body, synonymous with shadow tone.

Tzata
Pendant metal crescent-shaped 'collar' suspended from a halo.

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